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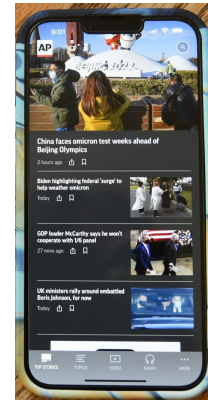
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Connecting

January 21, 2022

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this Jan. 21, 2022,

Not all the news is bad in our financially hard-pressed news industry.

Our colleague **John Lumpkin** shares the story of how local news nonprofits are moving from niche players to the mainstream in Texas' largest metro market – Houston. And pledging \$20 million in the process.

There are a number of journalists with direct AP ties, John included, among those who are taking part in building the movement to provide more local news coverage to readers.

It's our lead story.

Connecting's stories this week on the death of former AP newsman **BJ Reyes** have been posted on the Hawaii Reporter web site. Click [here](#) to view.

Finally, many of us have seen [the footage](#) of West Virginia television journalist Tori Yorgey reporting live when she was struck by a car Wednesday night as she covered a water main break and weather that brought snow, ice and slick roads. She hit the ground with a thud and popped back up to finish her live shot. "Oh my God," the WSAZ News correspondent can be heard gasping. "... I just got hit by a car but I'm okay, Tim," she tells the channel's news anchor.



Something like that ever happen to you while in the midst of reporting a story? Send it along.

Have a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Coalition pledge \$20 million to launch nonprofit newsroom in Houston



John Lumpkin (Email) - It appears that the emergence of local news nonprofits in Texas, once viewed as niche players, is going mainstream in the state's largest metro market. A "coalition" of [three local foundations and two others have pledged](#) to spend \$20 million in Houston to establish such a newsroom by "late 2022 or early 2023."

[A report in the Houston Chronicle](#) followed that announcement. It included the Chronicle's reaction and more context about local news coverage in the nation's fourth largest market.

One of the three lead local foundations to support the new news nonprofit is the Houston Endowment. As some Connecting readers might recall, the Houston

Endowment sold the Chronicle to its current owner, Hearst Corporation, in 1987 when federal law sunsetted foundation ownership.

This is the most pre-launch funding for local online news nonprofits in Texas by far and maybe the most so far in the nation. Two other successful ones, the San Antonio Report and El Paso Matters, were the individual initiatives of former news executives and friends of AP that have grown organically.

San Antonio Report was originally known as the Rivard Report, led by former San Antonio Express-News Editor Bob Rivard.

El Paso Matters is the brainchild of Bob Moore, former Editor of the El Paso Times and former Texas APME president.

The Fort Worth Report, launched in April 2021, used seed money from the Fort Worth-based Burnett Foundation to hire a CEO, Chief Development Officer and founding newsroom of four journalists. While the no-strings-attached pledge from Burnett was generous, that was a small fraction of what the new Houston organization has to fund an inaugural staff of up to 40 journalists.

(Disclosure - I serve as corporate secretary for Fort Worth Report. Like our predecessors in San Antonio and El Paso, we continue to expand as new support is found from a range of donors and sponsors. We should have a newsroom of 16 or more by late Spring 2022.)

In Texas, the Texas Tribune led the way for statewide digital news nonprofits when it was founded in 2009 with \$4 million in backing. Even so, its executive editor, Ross Ramsey, said "you could put our entire news staff in a closet back then." Texas Tribune now has 50 journalists, which it says is the largest statehouse bureau in the U.S.

For statewide digital news organizations, the Texas Tribune's success is mirrored elsewhere by the Colorado Sun and CalMatters.

The Sun was founded in 2018 as a journalist-owned public benefit corporation (which means it can make a profit). Former AP assistant managing editor Larry Ryckman leads the Sun, which now has expanded into joint ownership of 24 existing community newspapers.

CalMatters is a nonprofit, founded in 2015 and now has 50 employees, according to **its website**. Connecting readers will recognize one of its advisory board members, Tony Ridder, former Knight Ridder CEO and AP Director. Gregory Favre, former newspaper editor and Director of News for McClatchy, is a CalMatters Director. More than one former AP bureau chief visited Favre in various locations around the country.

Also, as Connecting readers know, another key figure in news nonprofits is former AP Senior Vice President Sue Cross, who is CEO of the **Institute for Nonprofit News**, a support organization with 350 members.

Disclaimer - this isn't intended to be a definite status report on news nonprofits. Poynter is doing a pretty job - as in **this link**.

That said, that's where jobs are being created with traditional newsrooms suffering declines. I know. Fort Worth Report is hiring.

Return to office update

Jessica Bruce, senior vice president, in a note to AP staff Thursday:

As we enter another year of the global pandemic, we continue to evaluate when we will be able to safely return to our offices on a regular basis.

As we said late last year, we plan to return to regular in-person work as soon as it is safe to do so. The AP Management Committee reviews the recommendations of the Return to Office team on a weekly basis. Determining the best, safest path back to work in our offices is a company priority.

Some AP locations may open for regular in-person work earlier than others, depending on local safety conditions. We will give you at least 30 days of notice before a return is required and, as always, we will follow all local laws and regulations about safe working conditions.

We will provide another update in February.

AP believes in both the value of in-person collaboration and the flexibility and efficiency that remote work brings. I want to assure you that when we return, we still plan to implement the hybrid model we previewed last August. These plans remain the same. Those who regularly worked in our offices before the pandemic will be required to work in the office on Tuesdays and Wednesdays to start, with a third in-office day added a little later. When the time comes, you will work with your manager to determine the third day you will work in the office. We are excited about this hybrid approach.

You can find additional details about AP's new hybrid work model on InsideAP.

In the meantime, we continue to strongly encourage all employees to get vaccinated against COVID-19 if the vaccine is available where you are. The health and safety of our staff remains our top priority. We are continuing to develop AP's vaccination policy and will keep you updated.

Please continue to familiarize yourself with AP's return to office policies, frequently asked questions and other information available on InsideAP. As a reminder, AP's offices are now open — in line with local rules and regulations — for a voluntary return. Everyone who returns during this voluntary period must fill out this form each week before coming into the office.

I appreciate the work you are all doing to support AP's mission and look forward to seeing each other in person. Thank you.

Connecting mailbox

Bradsher's account a reminder of bravery, wisdom of colleagues

Marty Thompson (Email) - Reading Henry Bradsher's account of reporting in Tibet in Thursday's Connecting was a fresh reminder of the bravery and wisdom of so many of our colleagues. And of how normal were my 38 years. No bravery, precious little wisdom. Offset by the privilege of working so many who exhibited both qualities every day.

My own expeditions included things like touring a Winnemucca, Nev., brothel with members of the state press association. No samples of more than green champagne or beer, just information. Immediately after the tour we all headed to the convention hotel to call our spouses about the tour -- so they would hear it from us.

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Resetting cravings

Colleen Newvine (Email) – Wednesday was the first day I have worn my wedding ring in months.

I ate and drank to comfort myself in pandemic, and everything got bigger, including my fingers. One day, I actually got scared I would have to get my rings cut off.

This month, I committed to a reboot of my eating habits. No sugar, no dairy, no white grains, no fried anything, no booze.

I am actually eating delicious food. I love fruits and veggies, I enjoy whole grains. I am not depriving myself.



But I am resetting those cravings. I notice that halfway through the month, I am not lusting for cheese and bread and sweets. I snack on freeze dried strawberries or celery and almond butter, and it's what my body wants. I feel good.

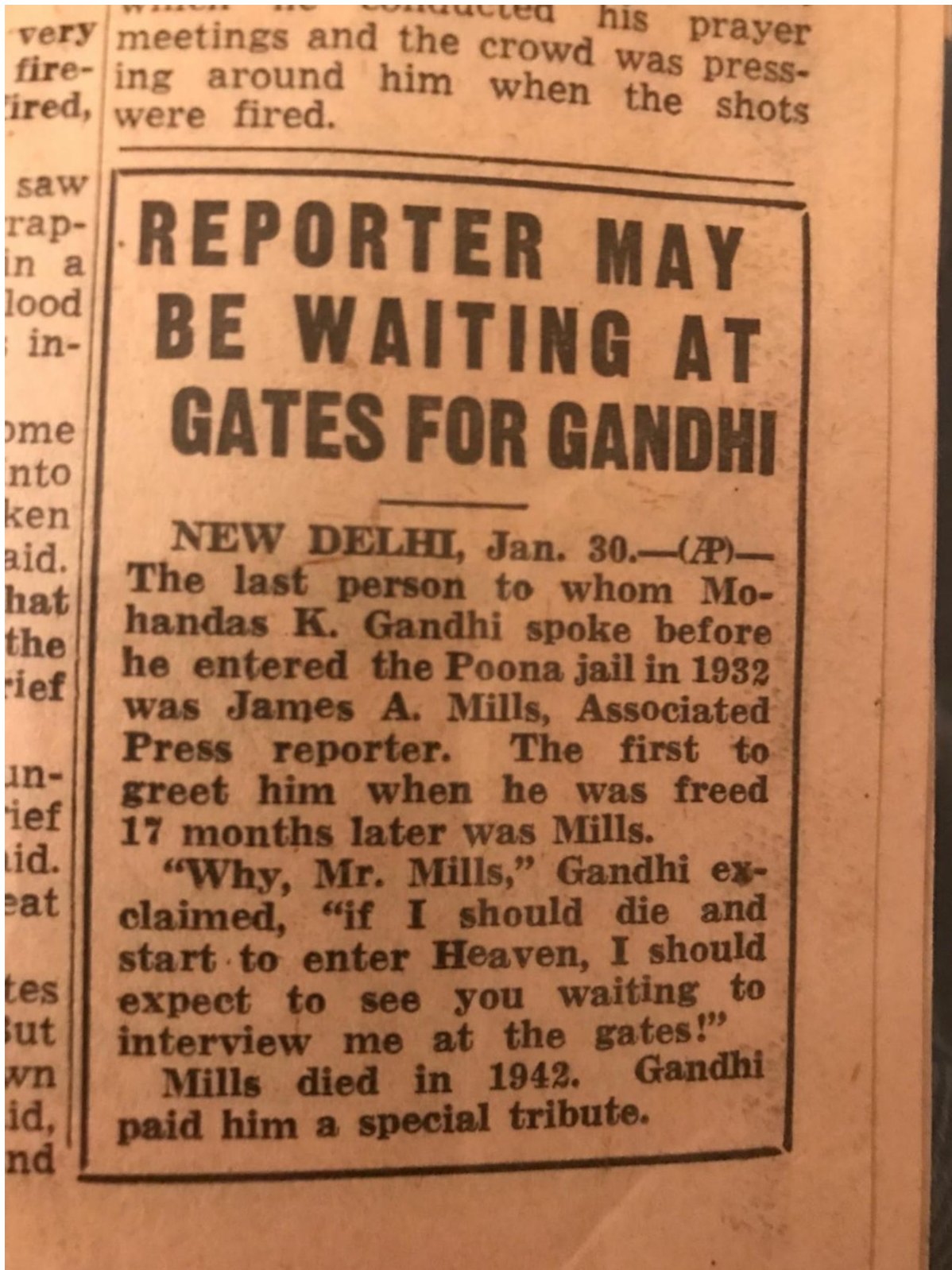
I have lost a few pounds so I gingerly decided to try my rings today. They slide on and off. Still snug but not cutting off my circulation like they did a few months back.

Science says we can change our habits in 21 days. I have nearly been at this that long.

I don't want to follow restrictive rules like this long term. But hopefully enough of my healthier habits stick that I can keep wearing my ring.

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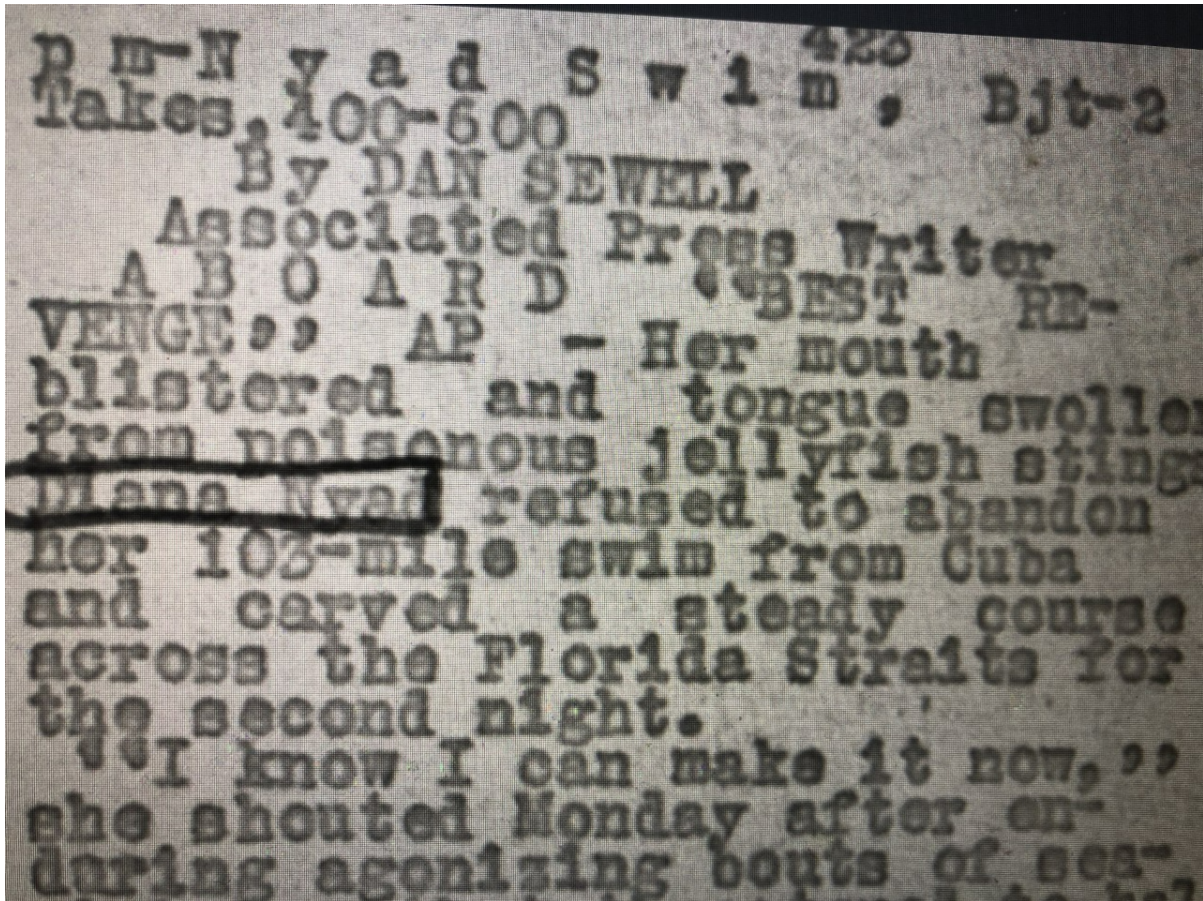
Hope he got his interview



Mick Boroughs ([Email](#)) - Looking through my collection of newspapers covering historic events I came across this brief article in the Jan. 30, 1948, Seattle Daily Times, now nearly 74 years old. The paper reported on that day's assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. I hope the Pearly Gates-based AP reporter got his interview.

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Unusual datelines – Best Revenge

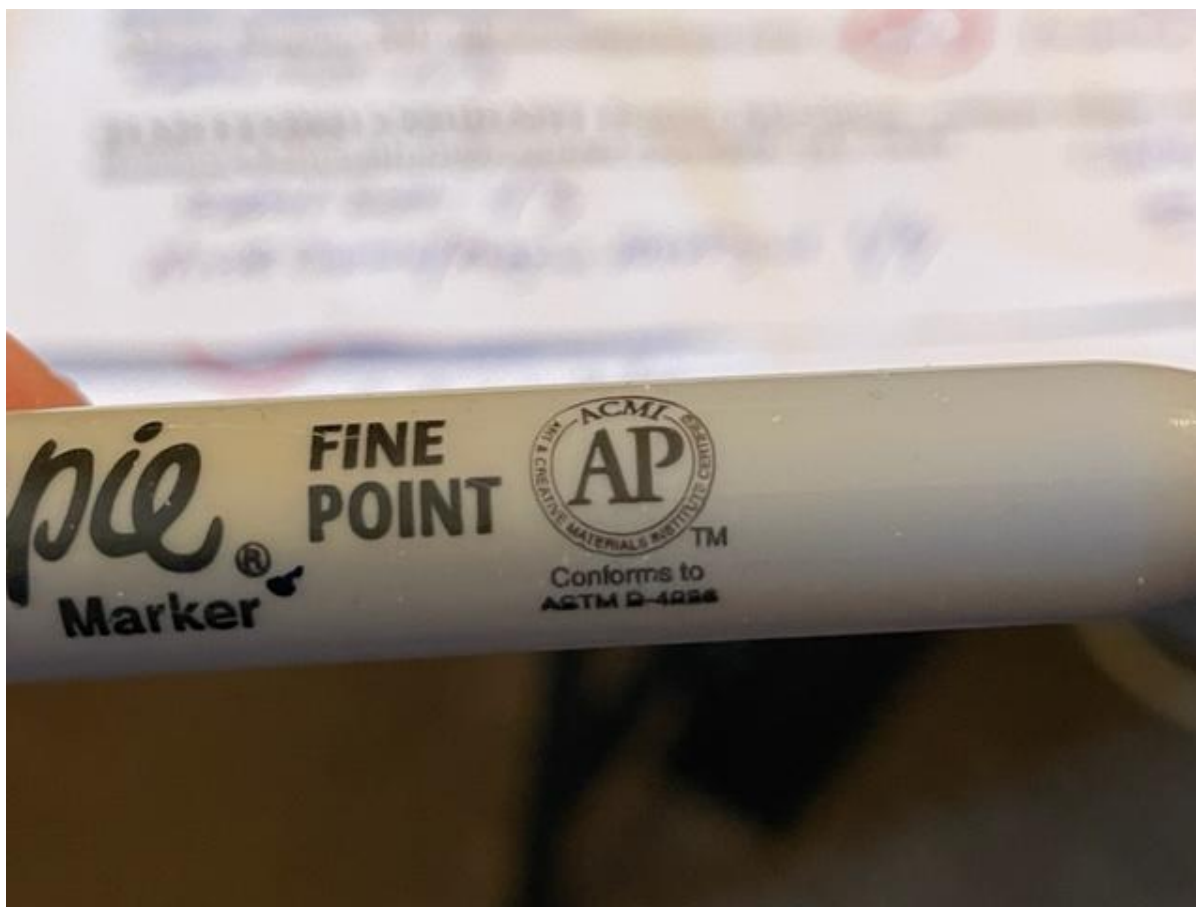


Dan Sewell ([Email](#)) - If you're still collecting unusual datelines, ran across this with the old Florida logs. 1978.

Best Revenge was the pleasure craft we co-chartered with The Miami Herald for marathon swimmer Diana Nyah's first attempt to swim from Cuba to Florida (she didn't make it).

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AP sighting...on a Sharpee?



Chris Carola ([Email](#)) - Been using Sharpies for quite a while, but this AP logo on the end caught my eye for the first time. Had to take a picture of it with my cellphone and enlarge it to read the fine print around the AP: Arts & Creative Materials Institute Certified.

The AP stands for Approved Product.

Ole Rocking Chair Funnies

Gene Herrick ([Email](#)) - It is a lazy old day, and my rocking chair still rocks, and as it does, my mind started thinking about the funny things that have happened during my 28-year career with AP.

While working out of the Memphis bureau, I was covering a flood in eastern Arkansas, in a boat right near a flooded house, where the residents, and a cow, were awaiting rescue. I heard someone on the nearby roadway shouting. When I turned, a man on the nearby little road was hollering, "Is your name Herrick?" I shouted back with "Yes." He then told me I had a telephone call (those were the days where they still had wall-phones!) at the little grocery down the road. I worked my way back and to the grocery. It was my AP buddy Bill Crider in Memphis, shouting, "Come on back home, you are going to Korea!" I was on standby to be a War Correspondent in Korea. I told him I was covering a flood. He said, "Forget it, and get back here!" I did.

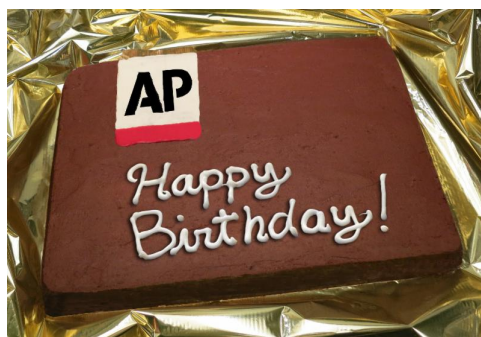
Another day in the Memphis bureau, a spring day, the city editor of the Memphis Commercial Appeal screamed at me across the city room, "Heh Herrick, when are you

going to get us a G...D... daffodil picture. For some time, every spring, I would come up with a feature picture of animals, or pretty girls playing in a big field of daffodils. The paper, a Scripps Howard paper (UPI), always used it big on page one. UPI used to get maddern hell when the paper used my pictures. Once in a while, I would meet the head photo man from UPI Atlanta, and he would say things like, "You are always whipping our ass and getting the play. You drive us nuts."

In Korea, during the war in 1950, I thought it funny when I was trying to take pictures of the plaque remembering the signing of the 2nd WW Japanese Peace Treaty with Japan aboard the battleship U.S.S. Missouri. It was when I asked the Admiral of the Pacific Fleet if he could move the sun up in this direction. Then Admiral Struble, turned and shouted up to ship's captain Duke. "Can you move the sun 10 degrees to the starboard bow?" "Aye, aye, admiral." Said the captain. The whole battleship chugged and moved. Knowing the sun was still not on the plaque, I asked the admiral for 10 more degrees. The whole process was repeated. All of this had an audience of about 20 mixed high-ranking military officers from the various services, who were aboard for the planned combat landing at Wonsan, North Korea. All of those officers had weird looks on their faces. I wore an Army field jacket, navy turtle-necked sweater, army tan shirt, air Force flight pants, and mukluk boots – and – no insignias of any kind. The War correspondent's shoulder patch was gaudy, and would get one killed quickly at the front.

Last, but not least it was Christmas time in Minnesota, and the Minnesota Vikings were playing, I believe, Los Angeles, A big Santa Claus was one the sidelines next to the end zone talking with the a huge man dressed as Viking, the team mascot and symbol. I always had a caption writer, who, as well sort of looked after me in case there were players coming at me on the field. While trying to take pictures of the two men in the end zone, two players blocking each other, came flying through the air and hit me on the shoulder, knocking me end-over-end, sending my cigar flying away. I still held my camera. As soon as this happened, an LA player came over and shouted, "That'll teach you to keep your eye on the ball." A couple of minutes later it became half-time, and the Viking team ran off the field near me, and coach Norm Van Brocklin came over, knocked me on the shoulder, and said, "Heh, Gene, welcome to the NFL!"

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



María Lourdes Pallais

Byron Yake

On Saturday to ...

[Amir Bibawy](#)

[Kevin Bohn](#)

[Ford Burkhart](#)

[Charles Pittman](#)

Stories of interest

US charges Belarus with air piracy in reporter's arrest

(AP)

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. prosecutors charged four Belarusian government officials on Thursday with aircraft piracy for diverting a Ryanair flight last year to arrest an opposition journalist, using a ruse that there was a bomb threat.

The charges, announced by federal prosecutors in New York, recounted how a regularly-scheduled passenger plane traveling between Athens, Greece, and Vilnius, Lithuania, on May 23 was diverted to Minsk, Belarus by air traffic control authorities there.

“Since the dawn of powered flight, countries around the world have cooperated to keep passenger airplanes safe. The defendants shattered those standards by diverting an airplane to further the improper purpose of repressing dissent and free speech,” U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said in a news release announcing the charges.

Ryanair said Belarusian flight controllers told the pilots there was a bomb threat against the jetliner and ordered it to land in Minsk. The Belarusian military scrambled a MiG-29 fighter jet in an apparent attempt to encourage the crew to comply with the flight controllers' orders.

Read more [here](#).

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NBC will not send announcers to Beijing for Winter Games (AP)

By JOE REEDY

NBC will not be sending its announcers and most hosts to the Beijing Olympics due to continued concerns about rising COVID-19 cases worldwide and China's strict policy about those who test positive.

It will be the second straight Games for which the broadcast teams will work mostly out of NBC Sports headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut, rather than the host city.

"Something significant has changed virtually every day for the last three months, forcing us to adjust our plan numerous times. And I expect that to continue as well as the challenge of doing the Olympics," said Molly Solomon, the head of NBC's Olympics production unit.

"With COVID's changing conditions and China's zero-tolerance policy, it's just added a layer of complexity to all of this, so we need to make sure we can provide the same quality experience to the American viewers. That's why we are split between the two cities."

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

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'China will be China': Why journalists are taking burner phones to the Beijing Olympics (Washington Post)

By Paul Farhi

Journalists covering the Winter Olympics next month say they'll do their work in Beijing on brand-new cellphones and laptops. When the Games are over, they'll simply leave them behind or throw them away.

The reason: Reporters are concerned that any devices they use there could become infected with tracking software, enabling Chinese authorities to spy on their contents. Hence, the use of "burner" phones and computers.

The better-safe-than-sorry measure highlights the wariness among some of the thousands of journalists who are expecting chilly working conditions in the Chinese capital, and not just because of the subfreezing temperatures on the ski slopes.

Local organizers, in concert with the International Olympic Committee, have imposed the tightest restrictions on reporters ever for an Olympics, which begin Feb. 4. The IOC says the measures are necessary to prevent the spread of covid-19, which was first detected in China's Hubei province in late 2019.

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

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Groups ask Iowa Senate leaders to give reporters more access (AP)

By DAVID PITT

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Free press advocates pushed Iowa Senate leaders Wednesday to change a policy that removed reporters from the Senate floor for the first time in more than 100 years and moved them to a second-floor public gallery where they can't interact with lawmakers.

"By limiting the access of the press to our legislators it also limits the fundamental right of the citizens of Iowa to have firsthand knowledge of the governmental process," said Terese Grant, president of the League of Women Voters of Iowa. "The freedom of the press protected by the First Amendment is critical to democracy and in which the government is accountable to the people."

The organization and others, including the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa and the Iowa Capitol Press Association, held the press conference to highlight action by Republican Senate leaders to remove reporters from the chamber's floor, where they had greater access to legislators.

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

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'Peril' co-author Robert Costa moves from Post to CBS News (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — Political reporter Robert Costa is jumping from The Washington Post to CBS News, where he was named Thursday as the network's chief election and campaign correspondent.

Costa, co-author with Bob Woodward of "Peril" about the final days of the Trump administration, said that he's concerned about the fragile state of the American democracy and the need to aggressively cover attempts to undermine it.

Costa has been a national political reporter at the Post since 2014.

"I really wanted to grow as a journalist and find new ways to tell the story of our political times," he said in an interview. "To me, there's no place better than CBS News with its legacy and integrity to do that."

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

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Kashmir independent press club shut down in media crackdown (Guardian)

Hannah Ellis-Petersen

The future of press freedom in Indian-administered Kashmir has been thrown into question after pro-government journalists and police officers forcibly took over its independent press club, which the authorities later shut down.

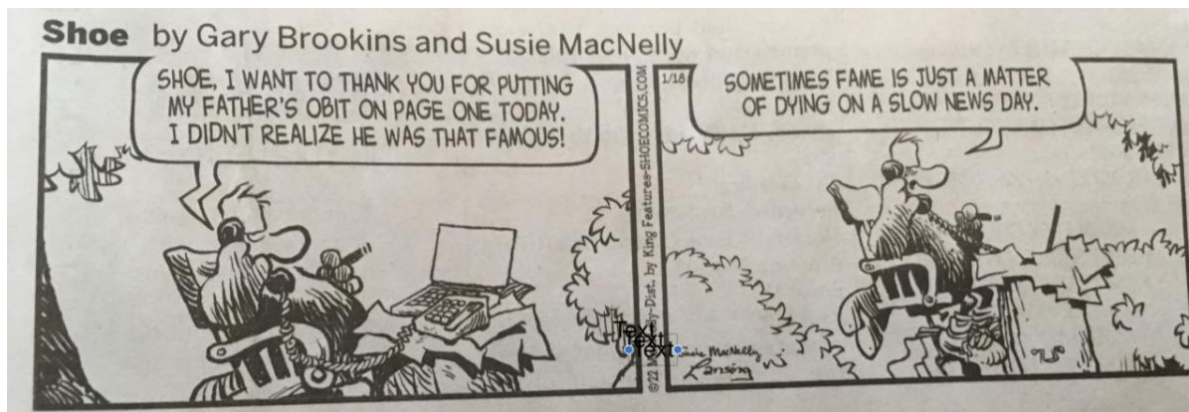
The incident, which follows the harassment and detention of dozens of journalists in Kashmir in recent months, is the latest attack on independent journalism in the region, which is disputed between India and Pakistan.

A small group of journalists supportive of the Indian government stormed the Kashmir Press Club with the assistance of armed police over the weekend, allegedly threatening its ruling body, and locked up the building, preventing journalists from entering.

The club, which has irked the government by defending media freedoms and its critical reporting, had been about to hold new elections.

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

The Final Word



Shared by Charlie Monzella.

Today in History - Jan. 21, 2022



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Jan. 21, the 21st day of 2022. There are 344 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 21, 2010, a bitterly divided U.S. Supreme Court, in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, vastly increased the power of big business and labor unions to influence government decisions by freeing them to spend their millions directly to sway elections for president and Congress.

On this date:

In 1793, during the French Revolution, King Louis XVI, condemned for treason, was executed on the guillotine.

In 1910, the Great Paris Flood began as the rain-swollen Seine River burst its banks, sending water into the French capital.

In 1915, the first Kiwanis Club, dedicated to community service, was founded in Detroit.

In 1924, Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin died at age 53.

In 1942, pinball machines were banned in New York City after a court ruled they were gambling devices that relied on chance rather than skill (the ban was lifted in 1976).

In 1950, former State Department official Alger Hiss, accused of being part of a Communist spy ring, was found guilty in New York of lying to a grand jury. (Hiss, who proclaimed his innocence, served less than four years in prison.)

In 1954, the first atomic submarine, the USS Nautilus, was launched at Groton (GRAH'-tuhn), Connecticut (however, the Nautilus did not make its first nuclear-powered run until nearly a year later).

In 1976, British Airways and Air France inaugurated scheduled passenger service on the supersonic Concorde jet.

In 1977, on his first full day in office, President Jimmy Carter pardoned almost all Vietnam War draft evaders.

In 2003, the Census Bureau announced that Hispanics had surpassed blacks as America's largest minority group.

In 2009, the Senate confirmed Hillary Rodham Clinton as secretary of state.

In 2020, the U.S. reported its first known case of the new virus circulating in China, saying a Washington state resident who had returned the previous week from the outbreak's epicenter was hospitalized near Seattle; U.S. officials stressed that they believed the overall risk of the virus to the American public remained low.

Ten years ago: Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich scored an upset win in the South Carolina Republican presidential primary, dealing a sharp setback to Mitt Romney.

Five years ago: A day after Donald Trump's inauguration, more than 1 million people rallied at women's marches in the nation's capital and cities around the world to send the new president an emphatic message that they wouldn't let his agenda go unchallenged. The Southeast saw the beginning of a weekend outbreak of tornadoes and severe thunderstorms; sixteen people were killed in Georgia, four people died in Mississippi and one death was reported in Florida.

One year ago: On his first full day in office, President Joe Biden signed 10 executive orders aimed at combating the coronavirus pandemic, including one broadening the use of the Defense Production Act to expand vaccine production; he also signed an order mandating masks for travel, including in airports and on planes, ships, trains, buses and public transportation. After being largely sidelined in the final months of the Trump administration, Dr. Anthony Fauci returned to the White House briefing room to provide an update on the pandemic. The U.S. said it would resume funding for the World Health Organization; the funding had been halted by the Trump administration.

Today's Birthdays: World Golf Hall of Famer Jack Nicklaus is 82. Opera singer-conductor Placido Domingo is 81. Actor Jill Eikenberry is 75. Country musician Jim Ibbotson is 75. Singer-songwriter Billy Ocean is 72. Former U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke is 72. Former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder is 71. Actor-director Robby Benson is 66. Actor Geena Davis is 66. Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., is 61. Basketball Hall of Famer Hakeem Olajuwon is 59. Actor Charlotte Ross is 54. Actor John Ducey is 53. Actor Karina Lombard is 53. Actor Ken Leung is 52. Rock musician Mark Trojanowski (Sister Hazel) is 52. Rock singer-songwriter Cat Power is 50. Rock DJ Chris Kilmore (Incubus) is 49. Actor Vincent Laresca is 48. Singer Emma Bunton (Spice Girls) is 46. Actor Jerry Trainor is 45. Country singer Phil Stacey is 44. R&B singer Nokio is 43. Actor Izabella Miko (MEE'-koh) is 41. Actor Luke Grimes is 38. Actor Feliz Ramirez is 30.

Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that focuses on retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013 and past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career in Albany, St. Louis, Wichita, Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City.



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:

- **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.
- **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?
- **Most unusual place a story assignment took you.**

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