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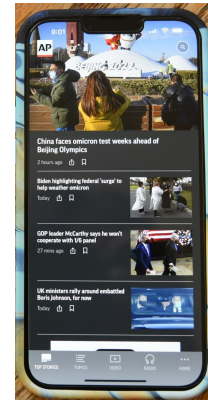
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Connecting

January 27, 2022

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this Jan. 27, 2022,

We lead today's Connecting with a story from colleague **Andrew Selsky** about his grandmother's escape, as a teenager, with her family from the advancing Red Army, 102 years ago.

Andrew, who is AP's Salem., Ore., correspondent, said he decided to write this, given the current Russia-Ukraine situation. One city she fled from is under threat of invasion. The other city, which was a much more dramatic escape, was annexed by Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2014.

Colleague **Nancy Trott**, former AP Seattle chief of bureau and Western Regional News Manager, is now internal communications manager for Amazon and shared this in LinkedIn:

“Here's a tip I picked up as a journalist that has served me well in communications. End every phone call with, ‘Is there anything I should have asked about, but didn't?’ That's how I ended a recent phone call with someone, and he immediately offered up three great story ideas!”

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Russia-Ukraine - A Refugee's (My Grandmother's) Story



Andrew Selsky ([Email](#)) - The Red Army is advancing on Odessa, a port city along the Black Sea, and a family flees with everything they can carry.

Lydia, her identical twin sister Zina, and their parents, Pauline and Peter Nepomyashchev, leave their home, a three-story stone building located just over one mile (2 kilometers) from the

city's famed Potemkin Steps and the waterfront. Peter, a White Russian Army officer, faces possible execution if he is captured.

The date was Jan. 20, 1920. Lydia was my grandmother. Ten months later, the family would flee another city, Sevastopol, under much more dramatic circumstances that tore the family apart. Against all odds, they would be reunited aboard a refugee ship heaving at mid-sea in the middle of the night.

Today, Russian troops are massed along the border with Ukraine. Some Ukrainians are making plans to flee cities like Kyiv and Odessa in the event of an invasion, 102 years after my paternal grandmother and her family fled for their lives.



I had heard sketchy descriptions of the family's ordeal, but I wanted to get the details so the story would not die with my grandmother. It is these personal accounts that preserve the collective memory of the Russian Revolution and subsequent Civil War between the Bolshevik Red Army and the White Army, led by former imperial officers.

So, armed with a cassette recorder and a notebook, I interviewed Lydia — my grandmother whom we called Baba — at her kitchen table in Vineland, New Jersey, about those searing events, a dozen years before she died in 1998.

Tattered documents that were passed on to me list her family's address in Odessa. Google Street View enables me to pinpoint the townhouse, at 89 Staroportofrankivs'ka Street, fronted by a wrought iron gate. The street is wide, its sidewalks shaded by numerous trees. Trams roll past on tracks laid in cobblestones.

In late 1919, Red Army forces were on the march after stopping a multi-pronged offensive on Moscow. By January 1920, they were closing in on Odessa. White Army officers captured by the Bolsheviks were being routinely executed. Peter was a White Army quartermaster and colonel.

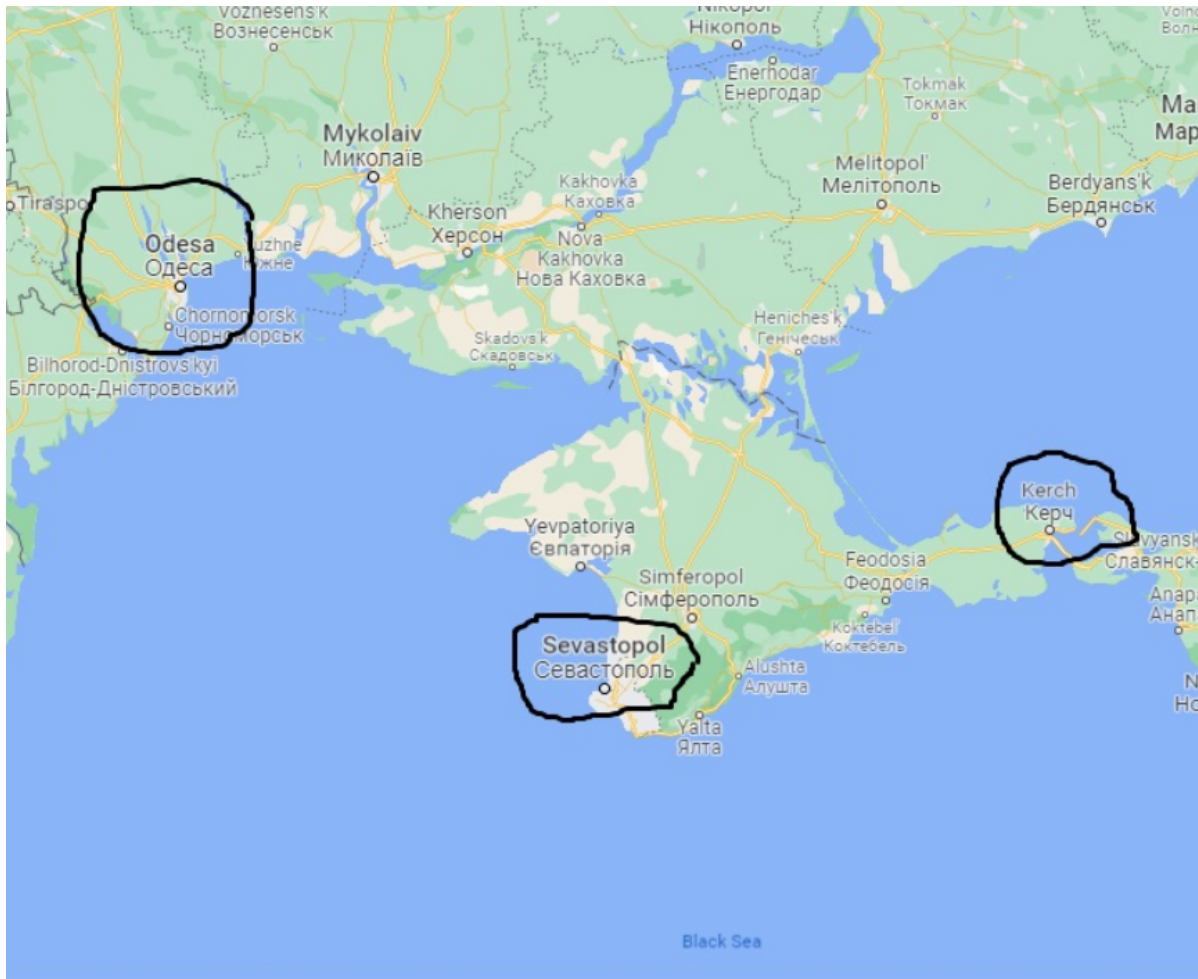
The family decided they had to make a run for it. They took what they could fit into several suitcases. Furniture and some valuable items were left behind, but not the religious icons.

"In Russian people religion, you could leave everything but not the icons," Lydia told me all those years later. The frames, made of silver and wood, were too big to bring so the painted icons were removed and packed. One hangs on my wall today.

Days before the Red Army entered Odessa, the family boarded a cargo ship and sailed to Sevastopol, on the southwestern tip of the Crimean Peninsula which was still held

by the White Army. The family moved across the peninsula to Kerch so Lydia and Zina could complete high school.

By November, the family was back in Sevastopol. But the White Army forces keeping the Red Army out of the Crimea were about to crumble. They tried to hold the line at the Perekop Isthmus, the only land bridge into the Crimea, but an overwhelming number of Red Army soldiers broke through, sending White Army troops into headlong retreat toward Sevastopol. The only escape route, for soldiers and civilians alike, was over the water.



A few foreign ships stood by to take on those displaced by the fighting. The Sevastopol docks were a scene of pandemonium as panicked crowds, the Nepomyashchev family and wounded soldiers among them, surged toward the ships. The Red Army began shelling the seaport.

Lydia saw a young nurse escorting a wounded soldier who was wrapped in white bandages, pleading with the crowd to let them through.

“She said ‘Please, let me go. It’s a wounded man. Please let me go, let me put him on the boat!’ And somebody answered, ‘There is no room on the boat!’” Lydia recalled. “And in the same moment all those white wrappings became red from blood, because he heard that. And he realized if he wouldn’t be taken on the boat, that would be the end of him.”

The 17-year-old twins were helping their parents lug big suitcases, bearing the family's few remaining possessions. Lydia was unable to maneuver with the suitcases, so she just dropped them.

"If I wouldn't have dropped them they would have just been torn from me just the same," Lydia recalled.

The jostling crowd pushed Lydia, who stood barely five feet tall, to the edge of the pier, and to a gangway of a ship, the French-flagged Siam. A young Russian officer helped Lydia aboard.

"He just stretched his arm, and I stretched mine. He grabbed me and I jumped over. And that's how I got into the boat," Lydia recalled.

But now she was separated from her family. If the ship left without them, she might never see her parents or sister again.

"I got scared, how I am all by myself. And then in the crowd I saw Zina, and I start to yell 'Zina, Zina, Zina!' And she heard me."

Zina, her suitcase having been torn from her hands, was giving up and turning away from the dock when she heard her sister. She dove back into the throng and was the last one who got onto the ship, pulled aboard by the same officer who had helped Lydia as the ship began moving.

In their desperation, some people jumped onto the gangway, breaking it and pitching them into the water. The sisters scanned the crowd for their parents and spotted Pauline, toward the rear, still pushing to get to the dock, her hat all askew.

The sisters yelled "Mama, mama, mama!" from the departing ship. Pauline saw them, found her husband and told him their daughters had left on a ship.

Night fell. The Siam waited a distance offshore.

"Nobody slept," Lydia recalled. "We were on the deck and we heard that some boats are coming, two or three boats were coming."

Some people on the Siam had flashlights, and they shone them on several approaching fishing boats. Some of the people left on the dock, including the sisters' parents, had hired the boats to take them to the Siam. Water was coming over the gunwales of some of the fishing boats because of overcrowding and were being bailed out. With the gangway broken, the only way aboard the ship was by rope.

Pauline was never an athletic person, Lydia said, but come what may, she was going to get up that rope to her daughters, urged by the terrible thought that if she didn't make it they'd likely be lost to her forever. She and Peter clambered up the rope as it swayed in the wind in the dark.

"I asked later ... 'Weren't you scared?' She said she didn't even think about those things. She just was thinking that she must go up. No fear, not anything," Lydia said.

Her father had to leave the rest of the suitcases behind, managing to bring only a shoulder bag.

“All he cared for was cigarettes,” Lydia remembered with a laugh. “And all he had in the bag were the cigarettes.”

The family slept on a blanket on the deck. Yugoslavia, whose royal family had close ties to Russia, decided to accept the refugees. The family arrived there in early 1921. At a food distribution center near Dubrovnik, Pauline taught Yugoslav soldiers how to make borscht. The family then moved to Sarajevo where Peter got a job in a flour mill and Lydia worked in a factory.

Three years later, they obtained U.S. visas. In America, the Nepomyashchev surname was shortened to Neppy. Lydia would marry another Russian immigrant. They would have one son — my father.

In 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin annexed Crimea. Today, an estimated 100,000 Russian troops are positioned near the Ukraine border. There are fears an attack on Ukraine is imminent, though the Kremlin denies it.

The fate of millions of civilians hangs in the balance.

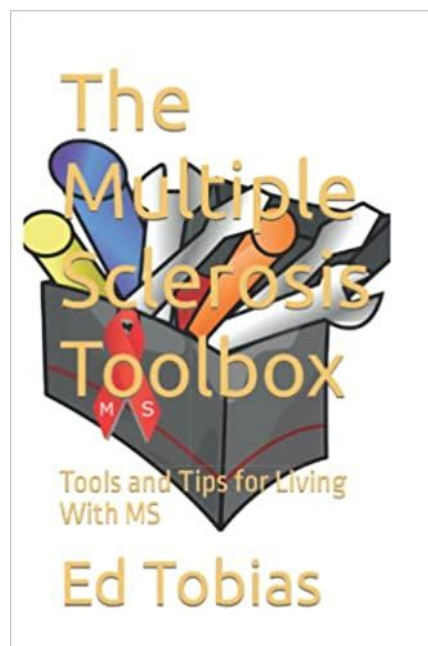
Connecting mailbox

Updated version of Ed Tobias book on MS published

Ed Tobias (Email) - I'm excited to share the news that an updated version of my MS book has been published. It has a new name, “The Multiple Sclerosis Toolbox,” a new cover and some new content.

The name better reflects the purpose of the book: to give people new to MS some tools to better understand and deal with our puzzling disease. It's also useful for old-timers who are searching for information about living with MS and it's useful for their families, too.

“The paperback version of “The Multiple Sclerosis Toolbox” is available now on Amazon as a paperback and an e-book.



I hope you like it and, if you do, will drop a short comment on the Amazon site.

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Examples of leadership in rural communities

Al Cross (Email) - Doug Richardson's story (in Wednesday's Connecting) followed on the heels of [this essay](#) by my brother, which I published on The Rural Blog: In a small, rural community, you can hold a position of influence and service without ever running for office.

It's an object lesson in how small rural communities – not towns, but rural neighborhoods – are led by people who never have a title but provide examples of leadership.

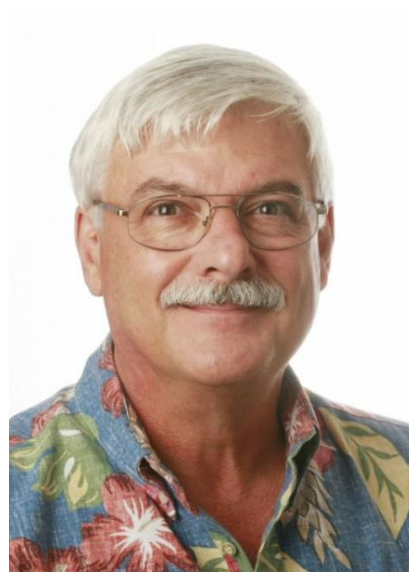
My brother, who is a historian as well as a lawyer, is an occasional eulogist and often writes sendoff tributes to locals who have died. This is the first one that went beyond one life to several, to make a larger point about rural life.

New-member profile - Richard Borreca

Richard Borreca (Email) has been a reporter and columnist on television, on radio and in Hawaii newspapers and magazines since 1971.

He came to Hawaii in 1968 from Texas as an undergraduate to attend the University of Hawaii, took off his shoes, discovered Kuhio Grill and never left.

He has reported on and interviewed every Hawaii governor since John Burns and covered seven national political conventions. Along the way he has won awards from the Hawaii Publishers Association, the Society of Professional Journalists, Small Business Hawaii and the Scripps Howard National Journalism Foundation.



After having worked at KHVH News, Channel Two and written for Honolulu Magazine, today Richard is a retired political columnist for the Honolulu Star-Advertiser, who writes a weekly column for the statewide paper. His wife June Watanabe worked with AP for three years before joining the Honolulu Advertiser, Star-Bulletin and Star-Advertiser.

Stories of interest

Photojournalist-turned-nurse captures COVID patients' intimate moments (CBS News)

CBS News

The most serious effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have happened mostly behind closed doors — in private homes and hospitals, where more than 800,000 Americans have died and many more have been sick.

CBS News and David Begnaud, lead national correspondent for "CBS Mornings," have extensively covered COVID-19 across the country since the pandemic began. Invariably, everywhere they went, a nurse or doctor has told Begnaud, "If only the public could see what we've seen."

Photographer Alan Hawes has tried to document the impact of COVID-19 with his photos. When he goes to work at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, he brings with him a special ability as he cares for the sickest of the sick COVID patients: he takes pictures of what many will never see.

Read and view more [here](#). Shared by Richard Chady.

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Are you passionate about journalism? Job ads and hiring editors sure want you to be (Nieman Lab)

By JOSHUA BENTON

Are you passionate about journalism?

Is it all you think about, day and night? Is there no greater rush than hitting publish on a big scoop? Is telling true stories about your fellow humans an obsession for you, a mission, your *raison d'être*?

I bet a decent number of people reading this would say yes. (Or, at a minimum, "Putting it that way makes it sound creepy, but yeah, I guess.") But how about this one:

Are you passionate about your current job in journalism?

Is covering suburban sewer district meetings what you've always dreamed of doing? Is it thrilling to guess which one of your newsroom friends will get laid off next? Did your childhood list of life goals include "lightly rewriting wire copy about more exciting things happening in more exciting places"?

There's almost always a gap between how you feel about your profession, defined broadly, and now you feel about your current, specific employment situation. Sometimes, it's the specific job that you feel better about: "Sure, the work's boring — but the benefits are amazing, it's an easy commute, and all my friends work there." But it's more often the other way around, and potential employers know that connecting with that broader passion can be useful in attracting people to their specific jobs.

Read more [here](#).

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Local news takes flight in South Dakota's largest city

(Nieman Lab)

By SARAH SCIRE

Here's a fun one. Did you know Paul Reuter, who would go on to found Reuters, initially used pigeons to fly stock prices and other bits of news between Aachen and Brussels?

In South Dakota, Pigeon 605 — a year-old sister site to SiouxFalls.Business — is delivering personalized local news with a modern-day fleet ... minus the feathers. (The "605" refers to the area code that serves the entire state.) In a city that just crested 200,000 residents, more than 4,000 people have picked a virtual pigeon to deliver news based on their interests and neighborhood.

Here's how it works. Choose ("adopt") a bird, decide on a name, and tell Pigeon 605 what news stories you're interested in. (In addition to topic-specific news stories, readers can also opt-in to categories like "Stories that will make me smile, laugh, or maybe cry," "Stories that are a little quirky," and "Stories that will make me a more informed citizen.") You determine how often you want to hear from your virtual bird.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Ralph Gage.

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The musical chairs of network and cable news are getting interesting (Poynter)

By TOM JONES

Brian Williams back to network news? Norah O'Donnell to cable? Or maybe it's Williams back to cable?

The music is playing, and when it stops, you could see some interesting names scrambling for some very good chairs — anchor chairs, that is.

Let's start with a real stunner.

CNN's Oliver Darcy reported that CBS News reached out to Williams, the former NBC News and MSNBC anchor, to gauge his interest in taking over as anchor of the "CBS Evening News." But Williams wasn't interested.

That brings up two immediate questions. What does this mean for current "CBS Evening News" anchor Norah O'Donnell? And why would Williams turn down what has always been considered one of the best jobs in TV journalism?

Read more [here](#). Shared by Bob Daugherty.

Today in History - Jan. 27, 2022



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Jan. 27, the 27th day of 2022. There are 338 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 27, 1967, astronauts Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom, Edward H. White and Roger B. Chaffee died in a flash fire during a test aboard their Apollo spacecraft.

On this date:

In 1756, composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria.

In 1880, Thomas Edison received a patent for his electric incandescent lamp.

In 1888, the National Geographic Society was incorporated in Washington, D.C.

In 1944, during World War II, the Soviet Union announced the complete end of the deadly German siege of Leningrad, which had lasted for more than two years.

In 1945, during World War II, Soviet troops liberated the Nazi concentration camps Auschwitz and Birkenau in Poland.

In 1973, the Vietnam peace accords were signed in Paris.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan and his wife, Nancy, greeted the 52 former American hostages released by Iran at the White House.

In 2006, Western Union delivered its last telegram.

In 2010, Apple CEO Steve Jobs unveiled the iPad tablet computer during a presentation in San Francisco. J.D. Salinger, the reclusive author of "The Catcher in the Rye," died in Cornish, New Hampshire, at age 91.

In 2013, Flames raced through a crowded nightclub in southern Brazil, killing 242 people.

In 2018, a suicide bombing in the Afghan capital of Kabul killed more than 100 people; the attacker was driving an ambulance full of explosives and raced through a security checkpoint after saying he was transferring a patient to a hospital.

In 2020, China confirmed more than 2,700 cases of the new coronavirus with more than 80 deaths in that country; authorities postponed the end of the Lunar New Year holiday to keep the public at home. U.S. health officials said they believed the risk to Americans remained low and that they had no evidence that the new virus was spreading in the United States; they advised Americans to avoid non-essential travel to any part of China.

Ten years ago: A federal judge in Seattle sentenced “Barefoot Bandit” Colton Harris-Moore to 6 1/2 years in prison for his infamous two-year, international crime spree of break-ins and boat and plane thefts. (Harris-Moore was transferred from prison to a work-release facility in September 2016.) Former Boston Mayor Kevin H. White died at age 82.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump barred all refugees from entering the United States for four months — and those from war-ravaged Syria indefinitely — declaring the ban necessary to prevent “radical Islamic terrorists” from entering the nation.

One year ago: In an effort to stave off the worst of climate change, President Joe Biden signed executive orders to transform the nation’s heavily fossil-fuel powered economy into a clean-burning one, pausing oil and gas leasing on federal land and targeting subsidies for those industries. The Department of Homeland Security issued a national terrorism bulletin warning of the lingering potential for violence from people motivated by antigovernment sentiment. Ty Garbin, one of six men charged in an alleged plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, pleaded guilty to conspiracy. Europe’s aviation safety agency said a modified version of the Boeing 737 Max had been approved to resume flights in Europe, following nearly two years of reviews after the aircraft was involved in two deadly crashes. Cloris Leachman, who won an Oscar for the “The Last Picture Show” and Emmys for her comedic work in “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” and other TV series, died at 94.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor James Cromwell is 82. Rock musician Nick Mason (Pink Floyd) is 78. R&B singer Nedra Talley (The Ronettes) is 76. Ballet star Mikhail Baryshnikov is 74. Latin singer-songwriter Djavan is 73. U.S. Chief Justice John Roberts is 67. Country singer Cheryl White is 67. Country singer-musician Richard Young (The Kentucky Headhunters) is 67. Actor Mimi Rogers is 66. Rock musician Janick Gers (Iron Maiden) is 65. Actor Susanna Thompson is 64. Political and sports commentator Keith Olbermann is 63. Rock singer Margo Timmins (Cowboy Junkies) is 61. Rock musician Gillian Gilbert is 61. Actor Tamlyn Tomita is 59. Actor Bridget Fonda is 58. Actor Alan Cumming is 57. Country singer Tracy Lawrence is 54. Rock singer Mike Patton is 54. Rapper Tricky is 54. Rock musician Michael Kulas (James) is 53. Actor-comedian Patton Oswalt is 53. Actor Josh Randall is 50. Country singer Kevin Denney is 44. Tennis player Marat Safin is 42. Rock musician Matt Sanchez (American Authors) is 36. Actor Braeden Lemasters is 26.

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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