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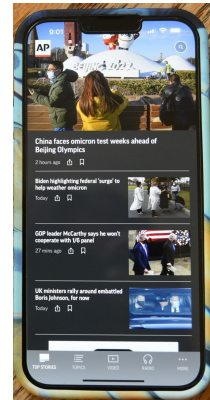
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# Connecting

May 20, 2022

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this May 20, 2022,

**Hello, I'm a Journalist. Can We Talk?**

That's the headline for a [New York Times Insider column](#) published Thursday in which writer Callie Holtermann states:

“Every day, reporters at The New York Times have to persuade people, often total strangers, to open up and share their stories with millions of readers. Including people’s real experiences in an article can lend credence to the reporting. Whether reporters are approaching people on the street or through cold calls, they often only have a few moments to make their pitch or build rapport — which makes a concise and compelling introduction all the more crucial.”

Take a look at her story and then share with Connecting how you make that important pitch to a news source. Anything that worked or did not work? I look forward to your

own story.

One of AP's newest retirees is Connecting's latest subscriber – the 1,715<sup>th</sup> to be exact. Welcome to [Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar](#), Washington newsman who specialized in writing about health care policy. He retired May 6 after 14 years with the AP and earlier work at the Boston Herald American, the Miami Herald and the Washington bureau of the Los Angeles Times. He joined AP-Washington in 2008 and helped cover the passage of the Affordable Care Act/Obamacare and its rollout, and kept covering health care thereafter.

The careers of Ricardo and colleague **Bob Burns**, longtime national security writer, were celebrated Wednesday during a gathering of colleagues in Washington, headed by Chief of Bureau **Anna Johnson**. We bring you more on Ricardo in today's edition.

Here's to a great weekend. Be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

## Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar: Never loudest voice in the room, always one with something insightful or informative to say



AP Washington journalists Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar (left) and Bob Burns honored Wednesday by colleagues at a retirement party. AP Photo/Alex Brandon

Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar concluded a journalism career of four decades when he retired from the Washington bureau of The Associated Press this month. His beat was health care policy.

Never the loudest voice in the room, always the one with something insightful or informative to say," said Washington CoB Anna Johnson when she and deputy bureau chief Michael Tackett and news editor Carole Feldman announced his retirement in April. "Never the one rushing out on Twitter, always the one triple checking his facts. Never the one seeking the credit, always the one willing sharing what he knows.

"It has been a long, prestigious journey for Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, one that has touched some of the most important stories of the last four decades: The Mariel Boatlift, the space shuttle Challenger disaster, the Iran-Contra hearings, the rollout of the Clinton health care plan (good preparation), the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the passage of the Affordable Care Act and several presidential campaigns."

More from the staff note:

Ricardo also covered the federal budget, homeland security and immigration. "My favorite federal agency: the National Transportation Safety Board, because it exists for no other purpose than to help us avoid preventable mistakes that can have tragic consequences," he said. Ricardo also is our resident expert on the most important social programs in the country, among them Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Few reporters have such a comprehensive grasp of Washington and how it works.

The cliché is that he's forgotten more than most of us know. Fact check: in his case, it's true.

Ricardo worked at the Boston Herald American, the Miami Herald (both in Miami and Washington), and the Washington Bureau of the Los Angeles Times. Then, to our remarkable good fortune, he joined the AP in 2008 and covered the remarkable story of the passage of the Affordable Care Act, before becoming our resident expert on health care policy.

Now, he has decided the time has come for his next chapter, which among other things, will be spent chasing grandchildren instead of politicians. We wish him all the best and truly hope he will be available for consultation for whoever the next person is that will have to untangle the maze of American health care policy.

Ricardo's last day is May 6. Please join us in offering cheers and tears.

-0-

**In a note to colleagues on his final day at work, Ricardo said:**

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with you from WDC, meeting colleagues across the AP circuit.

My belief in journalism is stronger than ever as I retire. That's thanks to the people of AP.

We pull off the “daily miracle” by scrambling together to make it happen, even if we start with nothing. It’s something to celebrate.

What I learned here made me a better reporter and news-writer. AP’ers in all roles and different departments introduced me to the ways of the wire.

Older operators like me come with assorted reliable tricks, but the younger people have impressed me, leaving me confident about our profession.

After nearly 43 years in daily journalism, for five employers, it’s time to see what else might be out there. (One of my first moves will be to get a library card.)

I will be following your report, since I don’t believe anything until I see it on the wire.

Keep going!

## Connecting mailbox

### ***MADAM PRESIDENT***

[Tad Bartimus](#) - regarding Scott Charton’s Dudes! Post - The obvious solution is to nominate and elect a smart, savvy 40-something woman to the presidency. I used to think it would actually happen in my lifetime but looking back at me in the mirror is a 70-something woman who realizes that probably won’t happen. I stay hopeful the generation just behind me will live to see MADAM PRESIDENT hold a joyous press conference her first day in the WHITE HOUSE.

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### ***Age, Race Reporting / Unconscious Bias Alleged***

[Ed McCullough](#) - AP's guideline seems correct and fair - that an 18-year-old is a teenager AND an adult, but that description is not necessarily interchangeable and news media should be consistent in how, and when, either description - like race, and gender - is applied.

There are examples, certainly going back in time, other than Michael Brown ("Black man") and Payton Gendron (white "teenager"), both age 18. But do they add up to NABJ's claim that "unconscious bias still plays a role in the way suspects and victims are portrayed in the media"?

One would like to think that news media are getting better in this area. Travon Martin generally was identified first by his age (not race) in USA Today and CNN. Separately, Kyle Rittenhouse, too, by his age alone by the New York Times and BBC.

#### **AP Guidance:**

*teen vs. man or woman: We use the terms man or woman for those 18 and older. It is important to be consistent in how we describe people of similar ages. The news*

*media in general has been justifiably criticized for sometimes using man/woman to describe a Black 18-year-old, but teen for a white 18-year-old. The 18-year-old can also work for a person of that age of any race. Again, be consistent.*

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## ***Lede vs. Lead – a poem***

Norm Abelson –

I lead with my lede  
when writing, and need  
to always take heed  
that it's catchy, indeed.

But when crafting the story  
I really more worry, and  
what fills me with terror,  
is making an error.

So lead or lede, whatever we choose,  
we're always certain to avoid the blues,  
if we remember to keep this in sight:  
Be sure to get that first graf right!

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## ***Gary, Fay, Mell and Hank***



This selfie shows Gary Clark (front) and wife, Fay, joined by Hank Ackerman (left) and Mell Ackerman (back right) on April 28 at the Clark's Tallahassee home in celebrating years of friendship in the AP. Old friendships, Hank wrote, are what life is all about. Our dear Gary died 11 days later.

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## *Catching up*



AP Kabul veterans Bob Reid and Deb Riechmann catching up on old times at a Washington, DC restaurant Wednesday after a retirement party for AP's ace military reporter Bob Burns and health care writer Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar.

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## ***Paul Colford selected judge of Sperber Prize***

**Paul Colford** - I'm pleased to be **named a new judge** of the annual Sperber Prize, which honors the memory of Ann Sperber, author of the bestselling biography of CBS newsman Edward R. Murrow, titled "Murrow: His Life and Times" and published in 1986.

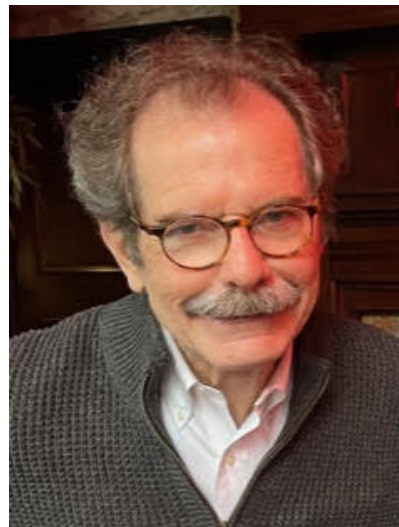
Past recipients have included Robert A. Caro, for "Working" (2020), Seymour M. Hersh, for "Reporter: A Memoir" (2019) and — five years earlier — Robert Miraldi, for his biography, "Seymour Hersh: Scoop Artist."

The Sperber Prize, awarded in the fall, is for the best biography of a journalist or the best memoir by a

journalist.

Last fall, two authors were singled out: Lesley M.M. Blume, for “Fallout: The Hiroshima CoverUp and the Journalist Who Revealed It to the World,” which explored the work of John Hersey, and Kerri K. Greenidge, for “Black Radical: The Life and Times of William Monroe Trotter,” a biography of the civil rights activist.

#BethKnobel, an associate professor of communication and media studies at Fordham University, is director of the Sperber Prize, which is administered by Fordham.



Sperber died in 2014.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



*On Saturday to...*

[Fred Frommer](#)

[Deb Riechmann](#)

[Robert Weller](#)

*On Sunday to...*

[Mike Hammer](#)

## Stories of interest



## ***Pete Williams to retire from NBC News after epic Washington career*** (Washington Post)



**Pete Williams, shown here in June 2019, is retiring from NBC News. (William B. Plowman/NBC)**

**By Jeremy Barr**

A jolt went through Washington when the news broke just before noon on Jan. 26 that Supreme Court Justice Stephen G. Breyer would retire at the end of the current term. But there was little surprise when it was revealed who had the scoop: NBC News correspondent Pete Williams.

Since joining the network in 1993, the Justice Department and Supreme Court reporter has distinguished himself as one of the best on the beat, lending deep inside sourcing and a steady on-camera presence to the coverage of some of the most momentous legal developments in recent history, such as the court's decision upholding the Affordable Care Act in 2012.

After nearly three decades at the network, Williams, 70, has decided to retire at the end of July, NBC News President Noah Oppenheim announced to employees Thursday morning.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Dennis Conrad.

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## ***New Twitter policy aims to pierce fog of war misinformation*** (AP)

By DAVID KLEPPER

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Twitter is stepping up its fight against misinformation with a new policy cracking down on posts that spread potentially dangerous false stories. The change is part of a broader effort to promote accurate information during times of conflict or crisis.

Starting Thursday, the platform will no longer automatically recommend or emphasize posts that make misleading claims about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, including material that mischaracterizes conditions in conflict zones or makes false allegations of war crimes or atrocities against civilians.

Under its new “crisis misinformation policy,” Twitter will also add warning labels to debunked claims about ongoing humanitarian crises, the San Francisco-based company said. Users won’t be able to like, forward or respond to posts that violate the new rules.

The changes make Twitter the latest social platform to grapple with the misinformation, propaganda and rumors that have proliferated since Russia invaded Ukraine in February. That misinformation ranges from rumors spread by well-intentioned users to Kremlin propaganda amplified by Russian diplomats or fake accounts and networks linked to Russian intelligence.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Israeli military ID’s gun that may have killed journalist*** (AP)

By JOSEF FEDERMAN

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli military has identified a soldier’s rifle that may have killed Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, but said it cannot be certain unless the Palestinians turn over the bullet for analysis, a military official said Thursday.

The confirmation marked a small sign of progress in the investigation into the killing of Abu Akleh, who was fatally shot on May 11 while covering an Israeli military raid in the occupied West Bank.

Palestinian officials, along with fellow journalists who were with Abu Akleh, have said Israeli troops stationed nearby killed her. The Israeli army says she was shot during a battle between troops and Palestinian gunmen, and it cannot be determined who fired the fatal bullet without a proper analysis.

Israel has called for a joint investigation with the Palestinians. But the Palestinians, who have the bullet, have refused, saying they don't trust Israel. They say they are conducting their own investigation and are ready to cooperate with any country except for Israel.

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

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## ***Jen Psaki Reveals One Reason Biden White House Has Avoided Feuding With Fox News: Trump*** (MEDIAite)

**By Tommy Christopher**

Former White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki revealed that former President Donald Trump was a major reason she and President Joe Biden's press team have tried to avoid feuding with Fox News.

On Wednesday, Psaki participated in a forum at the Institute of Politics at the University of Chicago entitled "Notes from the Frying Pan to the Fire."

IOP Speaker Series director Jennifer Steinhauer moderated the discussion, and wasted no time in broaching the subject of Fox News in pithy fashion.

"So I'm just going to get this out of the way. We're just going to do the Doocy," Steinhauer said, to a smattering of laughter.

Psaki made some well-worn observations about her "professional" relationship with Peter Doocy, but also revealed a few new insights that included the fact that the Trump administration's "disputing the legitimacy of institutions or the media" was a factor in trying to avoid feuds with Fox News and an admission that her bouts with Doocy may have been "performative":

Read more [here](#).

## **The Final Word**

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# Today in History - May 20, 2022



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, May 20, the 140th day of 2022. There are 225 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On May 20, 1956, the United States exploded the first airborne hydrogen bomb over Bikini Atoll in the Pacific.

### On this date:

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, which was intended to encourage settlements west of the Mississippi River by making federal land available for farming.

In 1916, the Saturday Evening Post published its first Norman Rockwell cover; the illustration shows a scowling boy dressed in his Sunday best, dutifully pushing a baby carriage past a couple of boys wearing baseball uniforms.

In 1927, Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field on Long Island, New York, aboard the Spirit of St. Louis on his historic solo flight to France.

In 1932, Amelia Earhart took off from Newfoundland to become the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. (Because of weather and equipment problems, Earhart set down in Northern Ireland instead of her intended destination, France.)

In 1948, Chiang Kai-shek (chang ky-shehk) was inaugurated as the first president of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

In 1959, nearly 5,000 Japanese-Americans had their U.S. citizenships restored after choosing to renounce them during World War II.

In 1961, a white mob attacked a busload of Freedom Riders in Montgomery, Alabama, prompting the federal government to send in U.S. marshals to restore order.

In 1969, U.S. and South Vietnamese forces captured Ap Bia Mountain, referred to as "Hamburger Hill" by the Americans, following one of the bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War.

In 1985, Radio Marti, operated by the U.S. government, began broadcasting; Cuba responded by attempting to jam its signal.

In 2009, in a rare, bipartisan defeat for President Barack Obama, the Senate voted overwhelmingly, 90-6, to keep the prison at Guantanamo Bay open for the foreseeable future and forbid the transfer of any detainees to facilities in the United States.

In 2015, four of the world's biggest banks — JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup's banking unit Citicorp, Barclays and the Royal Bank of Scotland — agreed to pay more than \$5 billion in penalties and plead guilty to rigging the currency markets.

In 2020, President Donald Trump threatened to hold up federal funds for two election battleground states (Michigan and Nevada) that were making it easier to vote by mail during the pandemic. Police ticketed seven people for cutting hair during a protest against coronavirus restrictions outside the Michigan Capitol, where about a dozen barbers and hair stylists defied stay-at-home orders to give free haircuts.

Ten years ago: A two-day NATO summit hosted by President Barack Obama opened in Chicago. Thousands of protesters marched through downtown Chicago, airing grievances about war, climate change and a wide range of other complaints. Abdel Baset al-Megrahi (AHB'-dehl BAH'-seht AH'-lee ahl-meh-GRAH'-hee), 60, the only man convicted in connection with the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988, died in Tripoli, Libya. Robin Gibb, 62, who along with his brothers Maurice and Barry, defined the disco era as part of the Bee Gees, died in London.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump opened a five-stop overseas tour, his first since taking office, receiving a lavish royal welcome in Saudi Arabia.

One year ago: Israel and Hamas announced a cease-fire, ending a bruising 11-day war that caused widespread destruction in the Gaza Strip and brought life in much of Israel to a standstill. CNN said it was inappropriate for news anchor Chris Cuomo to have been involved in phone calls with the staff of his brother, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, as the governor decided how to respond to sexual harassment allegations. (CNN would fire Chris Cuomo in December 2021 over his role in helping his older brother.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor-author James McEachin is 92. Actor Anthony Zerbe is 86. Actor David Proval is 80. Singer-actor Cher is 76. Actor-comedian Dave Thomas is 74. Rock musician Warren Cann is 72. Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, is 71. Former New York Gov. David Paterson is 68. Delaware Gov. John Carney is 66. Actor Dean Butler is 66. TV-radio personality Ron Reagan is 64. Rock musician Jane Wiedlin (The Go-Go's) is 64. Actor Bronson Pinchot is 63. Singer Susan Cowsill is 63. Actor John Billingsley is 62. Actor Tony Goldwyn is 62. Singer Nick Heyward is 61. TV personality Ted Allen is 57. Actor Mindy Cohn is 56. Rock musician Tom Gorman (Belly) is 56. Actor Gina Ravera is 56. Actor Timothy Olyphant is 54. Former race car driver Tony Stewart is 51. Rapper Busta Rhymes is 50. Actor Daya Vaidya is 49. Actor Matt Czuchry (zoo-KREE') is 45. Actor Angela Goethals is 45. Actor-singer Naturi Naughton is 38. Country singer Jon Pardi is 37.

## 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 as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Midwest vice president based in 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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