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Connecting

Sept. 13, 2022

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this Sept. 13, 2022,

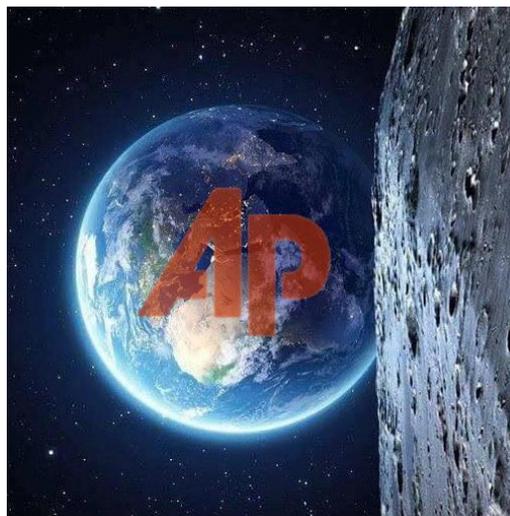
A voluntary Special Retirement Option is being offered by The Associated Press to eligible AP staff – age 60 or over who may be considering retirement.

In a notification Monday to those eligible, Senior Vice President **Jessica Bruce** said:

“The option is a one-time opportunity to receive your pension benefit under The Associated Press Consolidated Retirement Plan as a lump sum rather than a monthly annuity. As you know, AP’s defined benefit pension plans have been frozen since 2011, meaning monthly pension benefits were set based on service and compensation in 2011 and will not change in the future. This one-time, lump-sum option will allow eligible employees to receive their full Retirement Plan benefit in a single payment, either as cash, or to be rolled over tax-free into an AP 401(k) Plan account, an individual retirement account or other eligible employer plan, rather than paid monthly over their lifetime.

"Additionally, you will be eligible for a COBRA subsidy if you currently participate in AP's health plans and you decide to continue your health plan coverage. The subsidy of 50% will be available for up to 18 months of COBRA coverage."

Staffers were told they have until Oct. 31, 2022, to accept or decline the offer and that if they accept it, their employment with AP would end Nov. 22, 2022, and their retirement would take effect Dec. 1, 2022.



"As you know," Bruce told Connecting, "staff ask us to offer early retirement packages every year. This is an opportunity for some employees to receive a new form of their benefit, and for AP to reinvest any savings into people, technology and infrastructure. Happily, this is not a cost cutting initiative."

That point was reiterated shortly after Bruce's announcement by **Julie Pace**, executive editor, who said "I wanted to make sure you knew a bit about what this is, and what it's not.

"This is a limited Special Retirement Option that allows eligible staff, in News and elsewhere at AP, to change the way they receive their retirement benefits. This is something some AP employees have asked for over the years, and market conditions are making it possible to offer now. It is entirely voluntary and only available to some staffers who have a vested benefit in the now-frozen Associated Press Consolidated Retirement Plan. Those who are eligible have already heard from HR.

"I thought it might also be helpful to be clear about what this is not: this is not a buyout or a cost cutting measure. This is not an effort to push out certain employees or reduce the size of the staff. There are no targets AP needs to hit in making this offer. And any savings that do come from the program will be put toward new jobs and other investments in the AP. As you've seen, we are consistently posting new jobs – we've hired 126 people in News so far this year – and I anticipate additional jobs being posted in the coming days and weeks."

KUDOS TO MARK MITTELSTADT: Colleague **Hank Ackerman** expressed praise to **Mark Mittelstadt** for his story republished in Monday's Connecting on how the AP covered the 9/11 terrorist attacks. "I remember that day (those days) when I was in New York City," Hank wrote, "and my son-in-law was giving a seminar at Goldman-Sachs around the block from the World Trade Center towers at the very moment of the planes' crashes. He was sorely affected but survived. Your story of the coverage-- Mark -- has been the best ever."

Have a great day – be safe, stay happy!

Paul

JAWS meets in person for first time in 3 years



Clockwise, beginning with Linda Kramer Jennings (in blue): Nancy Day, Peggy Simpson, Edie Lederer, Sonya Ross, Audrey Korte, Tanya Gazdik, Mary C. Curtis.

Linda Kramer Jennings - For the first time in three years, Journalism and Women Symposium held its conference in person.

JAWS, as it is known, was founded more than 36 years ago by a group of women journalists seeking gender equity in newsrooms and in news content. This national network of women journalists holds an annual CAMP (conference and mentoring project), and we gathered for it last weekend at the Lakeaway Resort in Austin. Peggy Simpson and Edie Lederer helped round up other AP vets to catch up over breakfast. In addition to Edie, Peggy and me, the table included Nancy Day, Sonya Ross, Mary Curtis, Tanya Gazdik and a potential future APer, Audrey Korte of the LaCrosse Tribune.

It was wonderful to see each other although we missed Linda Deutsch, also a longtime JAWS member. As we sat around the table, I realized that it was 50 years ago this month that I first met Edie when I went to work in the San Francisco bureau. A few months later, she headed over to Vietnam and Nancy Day joined the bureau. Great colleagues and great friends.

Your stories of covering Queen Elizabeth

Malcolm Barr - Several weeks ago, I decided on a trip to England to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School in Ashbourne, Derbyshire (UK) where I was a boarding student for four years in the 1940s and president of the "Old Boys" society in the 1990s. The original school, still standing and occupied, opened in 1585 and was named after Queen Elizabeth I. We made reservations a few weeks ago, missing the present Queen Elizabeth's funeral by just five days! While a member of the Royal Air Force, I was called upon to help with crowd control in London when the young Elizabeth was crowned Queen of England, thus beginning her 70-year reign. God Save the Queen!

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Mike Harris - One of my favorite assignments in my 41 years with the AP was being part of a five-man team covering the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada in 1978. One of the highlights was getting to shake the hand of Queen Elizabeth. But that was only part of the story.

My friend Sam Skinner covered sports for a radio station in the Bay area of California. He weighed in at close to 400 pounds, and was about as loquacious as a person can get. As a Black man, Sam broke a lot of racial barriers and I don't think he ever met a person he didn't immediately consider a friend. I first met him in the early 70's while covering the Indianapolis 500. We quickly became good friends.

After I found out I was going to be part of the team in Edmonton, Sam, who served in an advisory capacity to the International Olympic Committee, informed me he would also be there.

After arriving in Edmonton, we were told that Queen Elizabeth, who was going to officially open the Games in the city's new stadium, would also be greeting officials and media at a gathering the evening before the opening ceremonies. We were given instructions that, if we attended, we were to wear suits or sports jackets. The Queen would do a meet and greet, where we would all line up and she would say a quick hello to everyone. The instructions were very specific: Do not make eye contact and do not speak to the Queen unless she speaks to you.

I told Sam about it, and he said, "No, I can't go. I didn't bring a sports coat."

My colleagues and I were upset because we didn't want Sam to miss the historic occasion. So I began calling around to find a sports jacket, size 54 long. Believe it or not, I found one at a local haberdasher. The AP crew and some other journos chipped in to buy it and Sam agreed to join us at the party.

The Queen looked regal and friendly as she came down the line, shaking hands daintily and saying a few words here and there. Sam was next to me in line, I shook her hand, smiled and nodded as she read my name off my credential. "Nice to meet you, Mr. Harris" was all she said before moving on to Sam.

She looked a bit startled as she noticed how big Sam was. But he had a huge smile on his face and she stuck out her hand. He reached out and shook her hand with both of his huge paws, looked her in the eye and said, "Hello, Queen Mama. I'm Sam Skinner

from the beautiful city of San Francisco by the Bay. If you've never been there, you really need to come sometime. I'd be glad to show you around."

The Queen never missed a beat. She smiled brightly and said, "Mr. Skinner, that would be lovely. I've heard wonderful things about your city. I hope to get there someday."

The officials escorting the Queen looked like they were about to faint and everyone else within earshot was trying to hold their laughter in check as the Queen, still smiling, moved on."

It was a highlight of the Games that year, talked about for days.

But that wasn't the end of it.

A year later, I was in San Francisco, on my way to a race in Monterey, and met Sam for lunch at a downtown hotel where he was to attend a meeting of the IOC later that afternoon. We were walking across the lobby toward the restaurant when a group of black-suited men, all with earphones and looking very serious, moved through the lobby asking people to step aside while a VIP came through.

Pierre Trudeau, the prime minister of Canada, was ushered into the lobby. As he walked quickly toward the elevator that was being held open for him, like any good politician, he was looking around, waving at people and making eye contact. That's when he noticed Sam at the edge of the crowd. Trudeau stopped just before getting into the elevator, pointed at Sam and said, "Queen Mama! Nice to see you" and continued on his way.

Sam couldn't stop laughing as the people around us looked bewildered.

Sam passed away in 1996 after several strokes. He 56.

Sam was so popular that they held a memorial service for him at Candlestick Park and many of the players and team officials from the professional sports organizations in the Bay area attended. Big Sam was definitely one of a kind.

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Mike Tharp - My Queen Elizabeth story unfolded in Sydney, Australia. In April 1970 I was on R&R from Vietnam for a week. It coincided with the 200th anniversary of the "discovery" of Australia by Captain James Cook.

My Nam buddy Mironchik and I, in fresh civvies, noticed a crowd 50 meters or so away, cheering and waving. Then we noticed a top-down convertible with the monarch giving the homecoming wave.

We waved back but somehow she missed us.

No biggie. On my last night of R&R, I was aboard a private yacht with the governess for a local barrister. I'd swept her off her feet—okay, I stopped her on the street and asked her out—and she invited me to Sydney Harbor.

The fireworks were fit, well, for a queen.

On the nine-hour flight back to the war, remembering it all helped put me to sleep.

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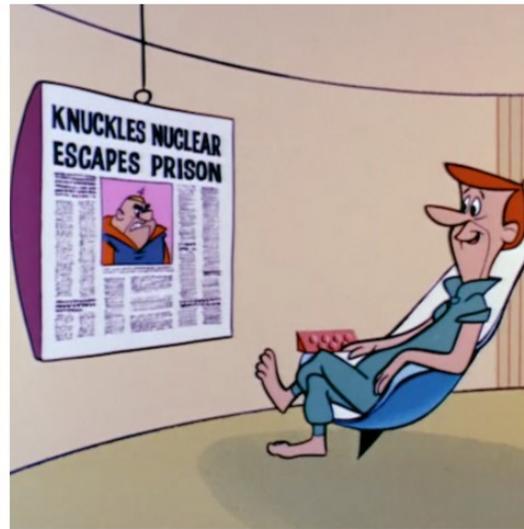
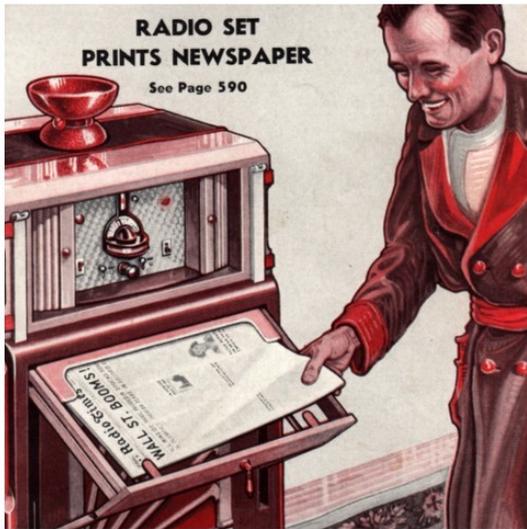
Chick Harrity – This photo I took of Queen Elizabeth showed she had a pretty good sense of humor. The weather did not cooperate with the visit and there were constant rain storms throughout. On March 3, President Reagan hosted a dinner event in honor of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip at the M. H. de Young Museum in San Francisco. The Queen chose a beaded ivory gown and Mrs. Reagan a teal blue green gown. During her speech at the dinner, Queen Elizabeth II stated, “I knew before we came that we had exported many of our traditions to the United States, I had not realized before that weather was one of them.”

Connecting sky shot – near Glacier Bay, Alaska



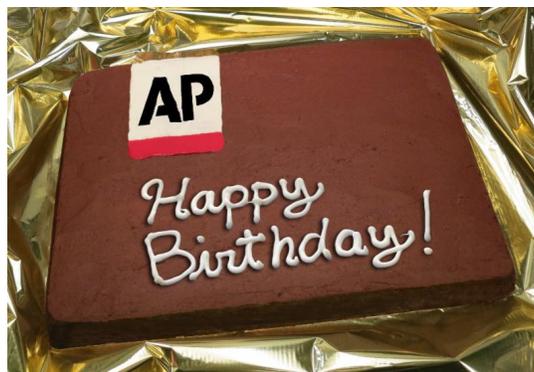
By Jerry Pye

Newspaper printed by 'radio set'



[Kevin Walsh](#) - I was having a great exchange with friend, mentor and former colleague Dave Tomlin about the printed newspaper in art. Which somehow led me to these images from a Nevada Press Association posting. My personal favorite is the newspaper being printed by the "radio set."

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[C.J. Jackson](#)

[Carol Riha](#)

Stories of interest

Although the killing of journalists is rare in the U.S., threats of doing so are not (NPR)

MICHEL MARTIN

Following the murder of Las Vegas Review-Journal reporter Jeff German, NPR's Michel Martin speaks with media critic Margaret Sullivan about threats to journalists and journalism.

MICHEL MARTIN, HOST:

Earlier this month, an investigative reporter for the Las Vegas Review-Journal, Jeff German, was found stabbed dead outside his home. Now, the murder was disturbing in its own right, but then a shocking arrest was made. Clark County Public Administrator Robert Telles was arrested on suspicion of murdering German. Now, the authorities have not provided a specific motive, but German had previously reported on mismanagement and a hostile work environment in Telles's office. Telles denied the accusations and went after German on social media. Although the killing of journalists is rare in the U.S., threats of doing so are not. And the important local reporting German worked on is also disappearing across the U.S. as more and more local news outlets close their doors.

Margaret Sullivan has been thinking about the threats facing journalists and journalism for a long time now. She's a longtime news executive. She just retired as The Washington Post's media columnist, and she's the author of "Ghosting The News: Local News And The Crisis Of American Democracy." And she's with us now to share some thoughts about this. Margaret Sullivan, welcome. Thank you for joining us.

Read more [here](#).

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NY Times' Maggie Haberman Criticized for Saving Trump Quote About Not Leaving White House for Her Book (The Wrap)

By ANDI ORTIZ

New York Times political reporter and CNN analyst Maggie Haberman faced backlash on Monday, after it was reported that her upcoming book reveals that twice-impeached former President Donald Trump was planning to outright refuse to leave the White House after losing the 2020 election.

“I’m just not going to leave,” Trump told one aide, per a CNN exclusive excerpt from Haberman’s upcoming book, “Confidence Man: The Making of Donald Trump and the Breaking of America.” Another aide claimed that Trump told a separate staffer after the 2020 election was called in President Joe Biden’s favor that “we’re never leaving. How can you leave when you won an election?”

Following the release of the excerpt, Haberman faced intense criticism online, with people voicing their outrage that this information was known prior to Jan. 6 and held until now.

Read more [here](#).

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Journalism in service of the billionaire class (Press Watch)

By Dan Froomkin

Washington Post media reporter Sarah Ellison profiled the new owner of Politico this week, raising a number of disturbing questions.

The new owner is Mathias Döpfner, the right-wing billionaire CEO of international publishing giant Axel Springer. His company bought Politico for a billion dollars last year.

The biggest revelation in the Post story was that shortly before the 2020 U.S. election, Döpfner proposed to his closest executives that they “get together for an hour in the morning on November 3 and pray that Donald Trump will again become President of the United States of America.” He added: “No American administration in the last 50 years has done more.”

When Ellison asked him about the email, he lied and said it didn’t exist. Then he said he was just being provocative.

The big question, then, is: What is this lying, right-wing billionaire telling Politico to do?

Read more [here](#). Shared by Larry Thorson.

Today in History – Sept. 13, 2022



Today is Tuesday, Sept. 13, the 256th day of 2022. There are 109 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 13, 1788, the Congress of the Confederation authorized the first national election, and declared New York City the temporary national capital.

On this date:

In 1803, Commodore John Barry, considered by many the father of the American Navy, died in Philadelphia.

In 1814, during the War of 1812, British naval forces began bombarding Fort McHenry in Baltimore but were driven back by American defenders in a battle that lasted until the following morning.

In 1948, Republican Margaret Chase Smith of Maine was elected to the U.S. Senate; she became the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress.

In 1962, Mississippi Gov. Ross Barnett rejected the U.S. Supreme Court's order for the University of Mississippi to admit James Meredith, a Black student, declaring in a televised address, "We will not drink from the cup of genocide."

In 1971, a four-day inmates' rebellion at the Attica Correctional Facility in western New York ended as police and guards stormed the prison; the ordeal and final assault claimed the lives of 32 inmates and 11 hostages.

In 1993, at the White House, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat shook hands after signing an accord granting limited Palestinian autonomy.

In 1996, rapper Tupac Shakur died at a Las Vegas hospital six days after he was wounded in a drive-by shooting; he was 25.

In 1997, funeral services were held in Calcutta, India, for Nobel peace laureate Mother Teresa.

In 1998, former Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace died in Montgomery at age 79.

In 2001, two days after the 9/11 terror attacks, the first few jetliners returned to the nation's skies, but several major airports remained closed and others opened only briefly. President George W. Bush visited injured Pentagon workers and said he would carry the nation's prayers to New York.

In 2008, rescue crews ventured out to pluck people from their homes in an all-out search for thousands of Texans who had stubbornly stayed behind overnight to face Hurricane Ike.

In 2010, Rafael Nadal won his first U.S. Open title to complete a career Grand Slam, beating Novak Djokovic 6-4, 5-7, 6-4, 6-2.

Ten years ago: Chanting "death to America," hundreds of protesters angered by an anti-Islam film stormed the U.S. Embassy compound in Yemen's capital and burned the American flag. New York City's Board of Health passed a ban on the sale of big sodas and other sugary drinks, limiting the size sold at restaurants, concession stands and other eateries to 16 ounces.

Five years ago: Firefighters who were called to a sweltering nursing home in Hollywood, Florida, where air conditioning had been knocked out by Hurricane Irma found three people dead and evacuated 145 others to hospitals; five others died later in the day. Former Republican Sen. Pete Domenici (doh-MEN'-ih-chee), New Mexico's longest-serving senator, died in Albuquerque at the age of 85. The Cleveland Indians set an American League record with their 21st straight win, a 5-3 victory over the Detroit Tigers. (The streak would continue to 22 before the Indians were stopped.) The International Olympic Committee officially awarded the 2024 Summer Olympics to Paris and the 2028 games to Los Angeles.

One year ago: School began for about a million New York City public school students in the nation's largest experiment of in-person learning during the coronavirus pandemic. Nearly all of New York City's 300,000 employees were required to be back in their workplaces, in person, as the city ended remote work; most were required to be vaccinated or undergo weekly COVID-19 testing. President Joe Biden surveyed wildfire damage during visits to Idaho and California; Biden sought to make the case that extreme weather events around the country showed the need for his plan to upgrade aging infrastructure.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Barbara Bain is 91. Actor Eileen Fulton (TV: "As the World Turns") is 89. Rock singer David Clayton-Thomas (Blood, Sweat & Tears) is 81. Actor Jacqueline Bisset is 78. Singer Peter Cetera is 78. Actor Christine Estabrook is 72. Actor Jean Smart is 71. Singer Randy Jones (The Village People) is 70. Record producer Don Was is 70. Actor Isaiah Whitlock Jr. is 68. Actor-comedian Geri Jewell is 66. Country singer Bobbie Cryner is 61. Rock singer-musician Dave Mustaine (Megadeth) is 61. Radio-TV personality Tavis Smiley is 58. Rock musician Zak Starkey is 57. Actor/comedian Jeff Ross is 57. Actor Louis Mandylor is 56. Olympic gold medal runner Michael Johnson is 55. Rock musician Steve Perkins is 55. Actor Roger Howarth is 54. Actor Dominic Fumusa is 53. Actor Louise Lombard is 52. Former tennis player Goran Ivanisevic (ee-van-EE'-seh-vihch) is 51. Country singer Aaron Benward (Blue County) is 49. Country musician Joe Don Rooney (Rascal Flatts) is 47. Actor Scott

Vickaryous is 47. Singer Fiona Apple is 45. Actor Ben Savage is 42. Rock singer Niall Horan (One Direction) is 29. Actor Mitch Holleman is 27. Actor Lili Reinhart (TV: "Riverdale") 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 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.

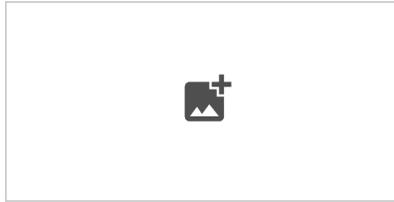


Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to [Ye Olde Connecting Editor](#). And don't forget to include photos!

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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