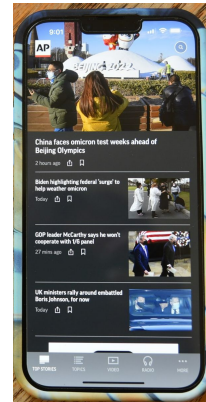


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Connecting

Dec. 9, 2022

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this Dec. 9, 2022,

Our colleague [Martha Bellisle](#), an AP investigative reporter based in Seattle, was profiled in The Seattle Times on Thursday for her abilities as a masters biathlon competitor.

At 64, she says she feels decades younger when competing with her rifle and skis.

"I feel like I'm in my 40s to 50s. I can win races and compete with people in younger age groups," Bellisle said. "It's not an age thing, it's a matter of going hard...."

The Times' story leads today's Connecting.

AP headed to Sundance: colleague [Daisy Veerasingham](#), AP's president and CEO, notes in a LinkedIn post: "I am thrilled to share that the AP and Frontline documentary '20 Days in Mariupol' will make its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in

January. We are so proud of AP video journalist **Mstyslav Chernov**, who directed the film, and the entire AP-Frontline team for their work on this important project.”

More in today’s Connecting.

My recent Spotlight column for my hometown Fort Dodge (Iowa) Messenger focused on **Melanie Rosales**, who began performing as a singer at the age of 8 and 60 years later, is still belting out tunes. Click [here](#) for a link to the story.

Have a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

AP’s Martha Bellisle

This Issaquah investigative reporter doubles as a decorated biathlete



Martha Bellisle, an Associated Press global investigations reporter and top-flight biathlon athlete, trains on roller-skis on the east side of Lake Sammamish Nov. 28. (Ellen M. Banner / The Seattle Times)

By Jen Sotolongo
Special to The Seattle Times

Masters biathlon competitor Martha Bellisle, of Issaquah, 64, doesn't let her age dictate her performance. In fact, Bellisle — an Associated Press investigative reporter by day — says she feels decades younger when competing with her rifle and skis.

"I feel like I'm in my 40s to 50s. I can win races and compete with people in younger age groups," Bellisle said. "It's not an age thing, it's a matter of going hard. Biathlon is a great equalizer because there might be someone who can ski well, but maybe there's another person who can shoot better."

Bellisle has found quick success since picking up the rifle less than 10 years ago, but the lifelong athlete didn't dream of becoming a decorated biathlon competitor. A work assignment at the Olympics piqued her interest in the Nordic sport that combines cross-country skiing with marksmanship, pairing a cardio-intensive workout with a stationary activity demanding intense focus. The sport has since become Bellisle's passion.

The reporter was no stranger to the snow nor competitive sports when she was tasked with covering the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. Bellisle began her own athletic career in the 1980s as a road cyclist in Boulder, Colorado, and has tried running, climbing and backcountry skiing. When she moved to Truckee, California, in 2001, the five world-class Nordic ski centers in town lured her into cross-country skiing. She spent nearly every winter weekend for some 15 years racing competitively in the Lake Tahoe area, winning three medals in the Masters U.S. National Championships during that time.

That background made Bellisle a uniquely expert source for stories from Sochi about cross-country skiing, luge, Alpine skiing and more. The biathlon caught her eye; she spent a lot of time watching the events, covering some of the races, becoming increasingly intrigued.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Dan Day, George Tibbitts.

AP, Frontline documentary '20 Days in Mariupol' to make world premiere at Sundance Film Festival



People take shelter in the basement of a youth theater in Mariupol, Ukraine, March 6, 2022. Still from AP and Frontline PBS feature film “20 Days in Mariupol.” (AP Photo/Mstyslav Chernov)

NEW YORK — The new feature film “20 Days in Mariupol” from The Associated Press and Frontline, the award-winning PBS documentary series housed at GBH in Boston, will make its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival this January in Park City, Utah, and be featured in the festival’s World Cinema Documentary Competition.

This moving and important documentary will be the first Frontline or AP original documentary to debut at the world-renowned film festival.

Told through the perspective of Ukrainian-born director and AP video journalist Mstyslav Chernov, “20 Days in Mariupol” is a visceral, first-person view of the early days of Russia’s invasion of the city of Mariupol, Ukraine.

Chernov and his colleagues, photographer Evgeniy Maloletka and field producer Vasilisa Stepanenko, were the last international reporters to remain in Mariupol as Russian troops attacked the city. Together they documented what would become defining images of the war: dying children, mass graves, the bombing of a maternity hospital, and more.

Produced and edited by Frontline’s Michelle Mizner, “20 Days in Mariupol” draws on Chernov’s daily news dispatches and personal footage of his own country at war. The result is a raw and haunting account of a journalist risking his life to share the truth of the conflict with the world.

Bearing witness to the horrors that enveloped the city, “20 Days in Mariupol” captures the beginning of the war through the lens of a Ukrainian journalist documenting the devastation of his home country.

Much of Chernov’s video and the visuals from his colleagues have been widely published around the world, from corpses in the streets, to panicked, displaced

civilians desperate to flee, to grief-stricken parents of children who died from Russian shelling – events reported by AP and Frontline as possible war crimes. The AP footage also directly refutes Russian misinformation about the war.

Chernov has covered Ukraine and other international conflicts for The Associated Press for nearly a decade. “20 Days in Mariupol” is his first feature film.

“We went to Mariupol not with the intention of making a documentary, but to contemporaneously report on what was happening. We later realized that, together, these video dispatches could tell a fuller story of what happened to the city’s people – a story that I hope will help audiences understand the scale of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the horrors that unfolded in Mariupol,” said Chernov.

“We are honored to work with Mstyslav Chernov and The Associated Press to share ‘20 Days in Mariupol’ with the world, and hope that this film can be both a historical document of this conflict and a reminder of war’s true human toll,” said Frontline Editor-in-Chief and Executive Producer Raney Aronson-Rath. “We are grateful to the Sundance Institute for including ‘20 Days in Mariupol’ in its 2023 film festival lineup, to Mstyslav, Michelle and the rest of the film team for their craft and thoughtfulness in telling this harrowing story, and to our colleagues at GBH, PBS and CPB for their unwavering support of this critical journalism.”

“The work of Mstyslav Chernov and his colleagues documenting the siege of Mariupol was nothing short of heroic. Without their intrepid coverage of the violence and carnage, the world would not have seen what was happening. This underscores the value of independent journalism – without it, the facts simply would not be known,” said AP Senior Vice President and Executive Editor Julie Pace. “We are so pleased to work with Frontline to produce ‘20 Days in Mariupol’ and are honored that the Sundance Institute selected it to premiere at its prestigious film festival.”

“20 Days in Mariupol” is part of a larger editorial collaboration between Frontline and AP examining Russia’s war in Ukraine.

“20 Days in Mariupol” will be distributed by PBS Distribution.

Read more [here](#).

On death of Dominique Lapierre

[Henry Bradsher](#) - Sorry to make a critical comment, but I have a problem with the introductory part of the AP article on the death of Dominique Lapierre, as run in Wednesday’s Connecting.

It said he wrote novels about Paris and a Kolkata slum that were enriched with facts.

No, not novels. Actually, he co-wrote best-selling histories: “Is Paris Burning?” (1965), about Hitler’s unfulfilled desire to have the city burned rather than yielded to the Allies; “O Jerusalem!” (1972), about the establishment of Israel; and “Freedom at Midnight!” (1975), about India’s 1947 independence and the assassination of

Mohandas K. Gandhi; plus a biography, "Or I'll Dress You in Mourning" (1968), about a Spanish bullfighter. But, yes, he did co-write a novel: "Is New York Burning" (2005).

These were co-authored with Larry Collins, a friend of his from before and during the time Collins was with UPI and later Newsweek. (Collins died in 2005.) They became so rich from their joint books that they could become full-time authors. Lapiere also wrote some on his own, including a deeply researched factual description of Calcutta (now Kolkata).

Morse Code

[Ed Tobias](#) - Morse Code is good for more than sending military traffic and news reports. It's good for the head - and for my multiple sclerosis - as I wrote [in this blog post](#) several months ago. It begins:

I speak Morse code. Dits and Dahs.

It's my second language, and I'm fluent.

I've been speaking Morse code since I got my ham radio license nearly 63 years ago. (My call letters are KR3E.) At first, I received what was sent at a very slow speed of five words per minute, hearing o-n-e l-e-t-t-e-r a-t a t-i-m-e and writing each on a pad. Later, I would hear whole words, not just letters. Eventually, I heard full sentences, with no need to write anything down. It's called "head copying," and I can cruise along at about 25 words per minute.

An early Christmas verse

[Gene Herrick](#) – T'was the night before Christmas, and all through the house, the creatures were running crazy and just making a mess.

Seems that a little libation doth lower the standards, and permits the spirit to rise, and probably creating a crazy joy in the overactive participants.

It would appear that there are those who get lost in the reason, but activates those elements that stimulate the funny button in one's spirit. Usually "The Spirit" that helps generate the spirit, comes from a glass bottle...Hmmmmm!

Being the night before, it seems, most folks are in a state of hope and anticipation.

Have I been a good person all year, or did I mess up a little? The question is will Santa overlook my "Errors?" and leave me a surprise?

From early childhood, the name Santa brought on hope, and anxiety in anticipation of Santa's arrival. I hope his gift will be a new bicycle, or, a new girlfriend. It doesn't matter which comes first.

However, while mudlin' the subject, I hope he feels generous and leaves both!

9/11 Extra Edition

Dan Sewell - Pearl Harbor Day on Tuesday (which former Trump press secretary Sean Spicer called D-Day in a Tweet) reminded me that I had been involved in an Extra edition.

It was Sept. 11, 2001.

I was Suburban Editor for The Cincinnati Enquirer and editor Rick Green had come out to visit that morning. Our building didn't have cable yet, so we relied on a couple of fuzzy TV's to follow the news.

While we were meeting, we heard some commotion and went out to see the blurry images of a plane crashing into the World Trade Center. After a lot of initial confusion, it became clear it was an attack, not an accident, and Rick immediately left and headed back downtown.

Then it was all hands on deck, everyone getting whatever local angles and reactions we could gather, and shipping it all to Dan Horn, The Enquirer's ace reporter/writer for a mainbar that covered two inside pages.

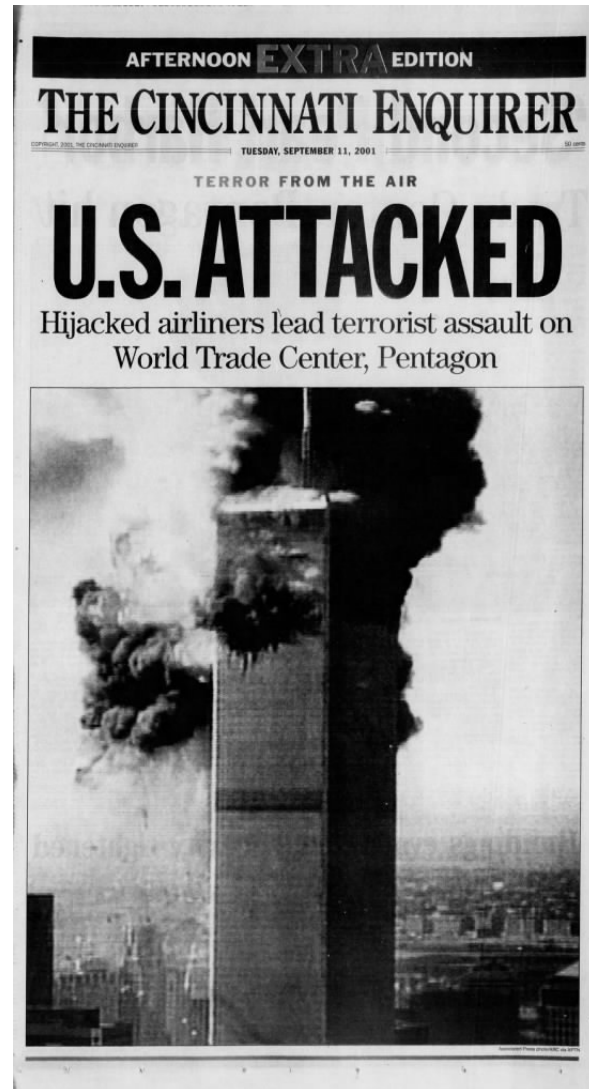
The front was a full-page photo of the smoking and burning World Trade Center and under the big headline "U.S. ATTACKED"

I don't remember how many pages it was total (I have a saved edition somewhere in my packed-full closet) but it was out on the streets within a few hours.

A very impressive operation that gave me some of that AP-in-a-big-breaking-story feel.

New category: Worst Journalism Movies/TV Shows of All Time

Ken Herman - My nominee: The original Superman series on TV. The one starring George Reeves as Superman/Clark Kent.



Basic premise of every episode: Bad thing happens. Superman shows up to save the day, thanks to truth, justice and the American way. Basic subplot of every episode: Crack journalists Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen can't figure out that Clark Kent is Superman (or vice versa. I never figured out which). This despite, episode after episode, Lois and Jimmy are perplexed that Clark Kent is never around when Superman is. And the fact that Clark looks and sounds exactly like Superman except for the fact that Clark wears glasses and Superman doesn't (X-ray vision and all that). And Superman wears a nifty superhero outfit and Clark wears a suit.



Lois and Jimmy. Inquisitive journalists at their finest.

The other highlight of the Superman TV series, as pointed out years ago by some comedian, is that in the climactic scene of every episode, Our Hero would confront the Bad Guy. Said Bad Guy would fire his pistol at Superman, who arrogantly would stand still as the bullets bounced off his chest. In frustration, the Bad Guy then would throw his pistol at Superman, who would duck out of the way. Bullets? No threat. Soft-tossed pistol, Superman ducks. Hmm.

One other thing, a thing I often wondered about re the comic book ads for X-ray glasses. If X-ray vision gives you the power to see through everything wouldn't you see nothing? Or perhaps it is adjustable.

Footnote: Reeves died of a gunshot wound at age 45 in 1959. It was reported as self-inflicted, but some had doubts. But there was no evidence that a soft-tossed pistol was involved.

Other nominees for worst movie/TV show portrayal of journalists?

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Howard Goldberg](#)

On Saturday to...

[Rachel Ambrose](#)

Ted Warren

On Sunday to...

[Daryl Beall](#)

Stories of interest

New York Times journalists, other workers on 24-hour strike (AP)

By ALEXANDRA OLSON

NEW YORK (AP) — More than 1,000 New York Times journalists and other staff walked off the job for 24 hours Thursday, frustrated by contract negotiations that have dragged on for months in the newspaper's biggest labor dispute in more than 40 years.

Hundreds of reporters, editors, photographers and other employees picketed outside the newspaper's offices near Manhattan's Times Square. With a hollowed out newsroom, the Times was relying on international and non-union staffers to deliver content to its more than 9 million worldwide subscribers until the strike ends at 12:01 a.m. Friday.

The NewsGuild of New York went through with its pledge to strike after the two sides failed to reach a deal in marathon negotiations that broke off Wednesday evening. The sides remain far apart on issues including wages, remote work policies and a performance review system, which the union says is racially biased. The current contract expired in March 2021, and the union has accused the company of dragging its feet on negotiations.

Read more [here](#).

-0-

Top TV '22: The Slap, congressional docudrama and royal loss (AP)

By **DAVID BAUDER** and **LYNN ELBER**

NEW YORK (AP) — In a year marked by unexpected winners and losers, television was keeping tabs.

A Hollywood star tarnished his image and that of the Oscars. A battered country stood up to an invader, again and again. The Jan. 6 insurrection became an unexpectedly watchable TV docudrama. A monarch was celebrated and mourned. Television entertainment had its usual highs and lows.

Here are some of 2022's defining TV moments from the perspective of The Associated Press' television and media writers.

Read more [here](#).

-0-

Asian Americans severely underrepresented among on-air TV journalists, report finds (Poynter)

By: **Angela Fu** and **Amaris Castillo**

When Archith Seshadri is reporting out in the field, his presence sometimes elicits reactions from people. Some are surprised to see an Indian American journalist.

"I think the fact that you see people that look like you, that can represent you, I think there is a level of comfort and a level of 'Oh wow, I feel more comfortable sharing my story with you because you are like me,'" he said.

Seshadri said, even now as the Atlanta bureau chief/anchor for Nexstar Media Group, he's the only Asian American reporter, even behind-the-scenes.

Seshadri's experience is not unique. A new report by the Asian American Journalists Association found that in the top 20 TV markets, nearly 25% of local stations do not have any AAPI reporters on air.

Read more [here](#).

-0-

Peter Cooper, Celebrated Nashville Music Journalist, Singer and Country Hall of Fame Exec, Dies at 52 (Variety)

By **Chris Willman**

Peter Cooper, one of the most preeminent journalists covering country music in the 21st century, a Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter-producer in his own right, and

most recently one of the foremost public faces of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, died Tuesday at age 52.

A significant part of the Nashville music community had been keeping Cooper in collective thoughts and prayers since he suffered a severe head injury in a fall late last week. He had remained in critical condition in the days leading up to his death, although hospital visitors had described him as showing signs of responsiveness as they gathered around his bedside.

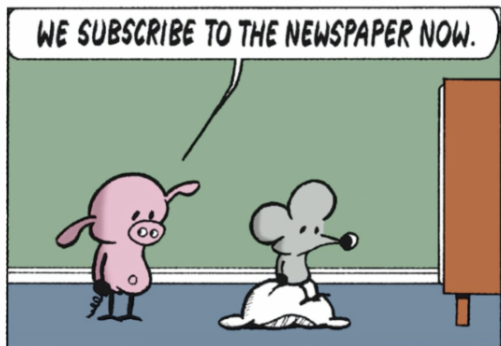
“It is with heavy hearts that we let you know that Peter Cooper passed away in his sleep last night, December 6, after suffering a severe head injury late last week,” a statement from his family read. “We so appreciate the kind words and prayers you have offered over the past few days. Please know that they have provided Peter and us with much comfort. We will soon announce details about a celebration of life to take place in early 2023.”

Read more [here](#). Shared by Jim Spehar, who noted: "Once past the obit, there's the best piece about writing I've seen in many moons. Beware, it's a long read. And I suspect he'd have flunked the AP writing test more times than I did."

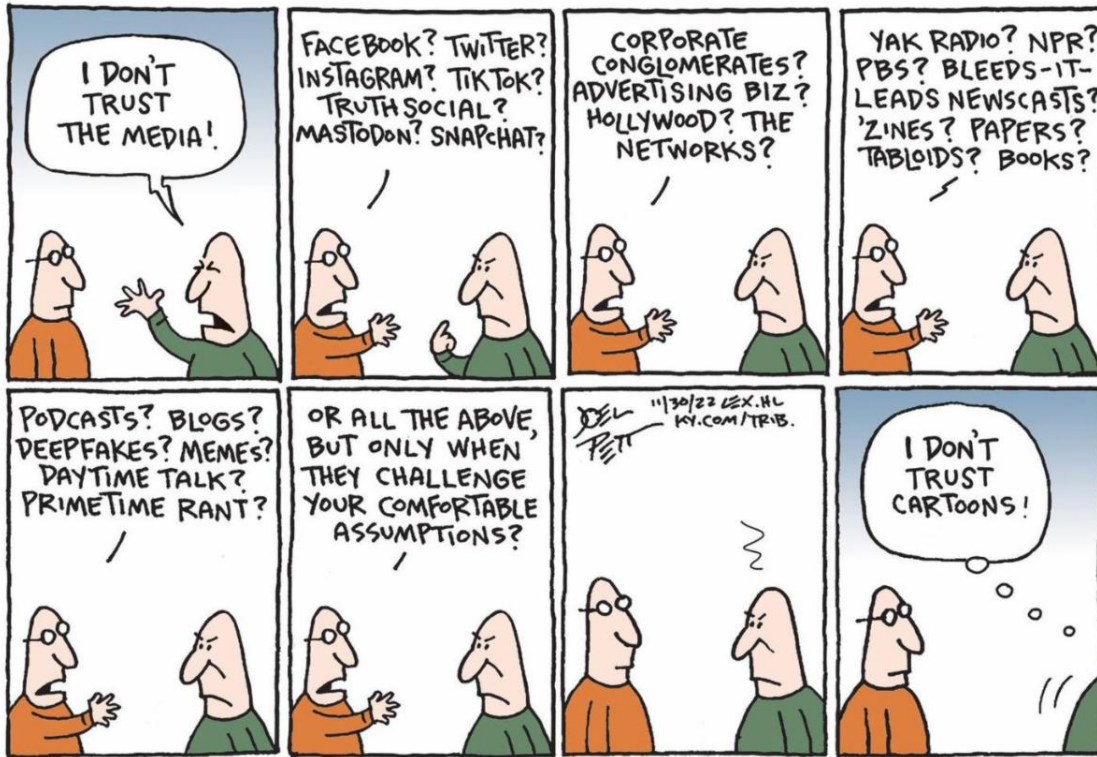
The Final Word

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

BY STEPHAN PASTIS



Shared by Dennis Whitehead



Shared by Len Iwanski

Today in History – Dec. 9, 2022



Today is Friday, Dec. 9, the 343rd day of 2022. There are 22 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 9, 2014, U.S. Senate investigators concluded the United States had brutalized scores of terror suspects with interrogation tactics that turned secret CIA prisons into chambers of suffering and did nothing to make Americans safer after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

On this date:

In 1854, Alfred, Lord Tennyson's famous poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," was published in England.

In 1911, an explosion inside the Cross Mountain coal mine near Briceville, Tennessee, killed 84 workers. (Five were rescued.)

In 1917, British forces captured Jerusalem from the Ottoman Turks.

In 1965, "A Charlie Brown Christmas," the first animated TV special featuring characters from the "Peanuts" comic strip by Charles M. Schulz, premiered on CBS.

In 1987, the first Palestinian intifadeh, or uprising, began as riots broke out in Gaza and spread to the West Bank, triggering a strong Israeli response.

In 1990, Solidarity founder Lech Walesa (lek vah-WEN'-sah) won Poland's presidential runoff by a landslide.

In 1992, Britain's Prince Charles and Princess Diana announced their separation. (The couple's divorce became final in August 1996.)

In 2000, the U-S Supreme Court ordered a temporary halt in the Florida vote count on which Al Gore pinned his best hopes of winning the White House.

In 2006, a fire broke out at a Moscow drug treatment hospital, killing 46 women trapped by barred windows and a locked gate.

In 2011, the European Union said 26 of its 27 member countries were open to joining a new treaty tying their finances together to solve the euro crisis; Britain remained opposed.

In 2013, scientists revealed that NASA's Curiosity rover had uncovered signs of an ancient freshwater lake on Mars.

In 2020, commercial flights with Boeing 737 Max jetliners resumed for the first time since they were grounded worldwide nearly two years earlier following two deadly accidents; Brazil's Gol Airlines became the first in the world to return the planes to its active fleet.

Ten years ago: U.S. special forces rescued an American doctor captured by the Taliban in Afghanistan; a Navy SEAL, Petty Officer 1st Class Nicolas D. Checque, was killed during the rescue of Dr. Dilip Joseph. Same-sex couples in Washington state began exchanging vows just after midnight under a new state law allowing gay marriage. Mexican-American singer Jenni Rivera, 43, and six others were killed in a plane crash in northern Mexico.

Five years ago: After more than three years of combat operations, Iraq announced that the fight against the Islamic State group was over, and that Iraq's security forces had driven the extremists from all of the territory they once held. Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield became the sixth Sooner to win college football's Heisman Trophy.

One year ago: A jury in Chicago convicted former "Empire" actor Jussie Smollett on charges he staged an anti-gay, racist attack on himself and then lied to Chicago police about it. (Smollett was sentenced to 150 days in jail; he was allowed to go free after six days while he appealed the conviction.) A federal appeals court ruled against an effort by former President Donald Trump to shield documents from the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol. Starbucks workers at a store in Buffalo, New York, voted to unionize, a first for the 50-year-old coffee retailer in the U.S. A federal jury in Arkansas convicted former reality TV star Josh Duggar of downloading and possessing child pornography. (Duggar would be sentenced to more than 12 years in prison.) Al Unser, one of only four drivers to win the Indianapolis 500 four times, died following years of health issues; he was 82. Provocative Italian filmmaker Lina Wertmüller died in Rome at 93.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Dame Judi Dench is 88. Actor Beau Bridges is 81. Football Hall of Famer Dick Butkus is 80. Actor Michael Nouri is 77. Former Sen. Thomas Daschle, D-S.D., is 75. World Golf Hall of Famer Tom Kite is 73. Singer Joan Armatrading is 72. Actor Michael Dorn is 70. Actor John Malkovich is 69. Country singer Sylvia is 66. Singer Donny Osmond is 65. Rock musician Nick Seymour (Crowded House) is 64. Comedian Mario Cantone is 63. Actor David Anthony Higgins is 61. Actor Joe Lando is 61. Actor Felicity Huffman is 60. Empress Masako of Japan is 59. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., is 56. Rock singer-musician Thomas Flowers (Oleander) is 55. Rock musician Brian Bell (Weezer) is 54. Rock singer-musician Jakob Dylan (Wallflowers) is 53. TV personality-businessperson Lori Greiner (TV: "Shark Tank") is 53. Actor Allison Smith is 53. Songwriter and former "American Idol" judge Kara DioGuardi (dee-oh-GWAHR'-dee) is 52. Country singer David Kersh is 52. Actor Reiko (RAY'-koh) Aylesworth is 50. Rock musician Tre Cool (Green Day) is 50. Rapper Canibus is 48. Actor Kevin Daniels is 46. Actor-writer-director Mark Duplass is 46. Rock singer Imogen Heap is 45. Actor Jesse Metcalfe is 44. Actor Simon Helberg is 42. Actor Jolene Purdy is 39. Actor Joshua Sasse is 35. Actor Ashleigh Brewer is 32. Olympic gold and silver medal gymnast McKayla Maroney is 27. Olympic silver medal gymnast MyKayla Skinner 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?

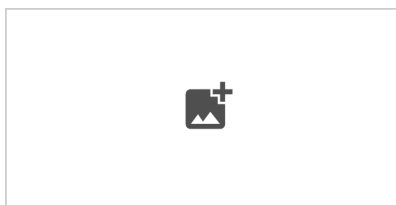
- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.



Paul Stevens

Editor, Connecting newsletter

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