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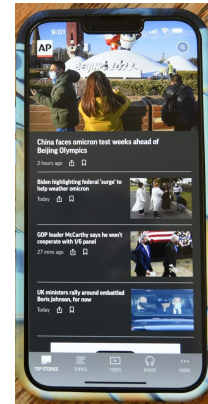
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Connecting

Jan. 5, 2023

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JACK SMITH / The Associated Press

Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this Jan. 5, 2023,

With sadness we bring news of the death of longtime Portland, Ore., AP photographer **Jack Smith** on Wednesday morning.

The news was shared with Connecting by his longtime friend and colleague **Jeff Robbins**. Jack is the first known member of the AP retiree family to pass away in this new year.

One of his signature assignments - in which he bravely excelled - was coverage of the eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980 - noting the photo he shot above. If you have a favorite memory of working with him, please send it along.

Today's issue also brings news of the appointment of four new Assistant News Directors, whose job will be to oversee reporters, video journalists and photographers in their states. This is part of a restructuring of how the AP covers the United States. More such appointments are to come.

Our condolences go out to colleague **Dave Gwizdowski** on the death of his mother, Claire L. Gwizdowski, on New Year's Day. Click [here](#) for her obituary.

Here's to a great day ahead – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Jack Smith, longtime AP photographer in Portland, Ore., dies

[Jeffrey Robbins](#) - It is with great sadness that I let his many friends and colleagues know that retired Associated Press photographer Jack Smith passed Wednesday morning at his home in La Mesa, California. He is survived by his wife Judy and children Melissa and Matt.

Born in Salt City, Utah, Jack, known by his close friends as "The Pirate" passed peacefully at his home.

During his AP career, Jack was the Portland, Ore., bureau photographer until he retired in the 1990's.

First of all, I want everyone to know that Jack was "my brother from another mother." We were that close.

We first met in the 1970s when I started as a photographer with AP and remained close friends all those years. We talked for many hours each week before his death.

There are so many stories and memories I have of Jack. He was one of the best sport shooters I ever worked with and loved covering the World Cup yachting events and Skiing competitions around the world. We both worked together covering the Olympics, numerous Super Bowls, and the Pope visits to other countries.

Jack loved the ocean, boats and sailing. He preferred being Captain on his own ships (or your ship) and if you were lucky enough to be invited, you were working for him...the Boss.

Jack had the ability to listen intently to your story, then fix your face in his sites, and then bore into your soul. All 6 foot, 4 inches of him.

He was kind. He was gracious and he was generous, but never taken for a fool. He had a hearty, barky laugh you couldn't help laughing along with.

He gave good advice, but rarely took any from anyone else. He cooked a mean steak, and claimed a meat thermometer made him a steak-master.

One of the secrets we kept from the AP was that we worked together as friends throughout the years although we both had our own personalities; we covered events as a team to be recognized.



Funny unknown story about Jack was that he loved Snickers candy bars. I always stocked up on small bars and carried them in my camera bag. When we would meet in airports, I would immediately toss him a Snickers bar and it always seemed to relieve tension before a major story.

Hopefully, he is on another adventure now, with mates of his own, telling his crew just what to do. The rest of us are bailing, right behind you Jack.

I loved that man and his family. There are so many things I will remember of Jack but the first is our friendship, throughout the years. It will be hard to take his speed dial number out of my phone. It's sad that the speed dial section on my phone list keeps getting smaller every year as I approach 80.

Rest in peace, my friend, brother and colleague. You are surely missed and loved.

(No immediate plans have been announced as to a ceremony for Jack at this time.)

Memories of Jack Smith



Lava dome continues to grow inside the crater of the volcano, Mount St. Helens, Oct. 29, 1980. The dome is about 1,000 feet across. Mount St. Helens is located 45 miles northeast of Portland, Oregon. (AP Photo/Jack Smith)
(Jack Smith)

John Brewer - I knew Jack, liked him a lot, had huge respect for his talents.

Jeff Robbins captured him perfectly.

Though Mount St. Helens was the responsibility of the Seattle bureau -- it was in the south end of the state -- the mountain was closest to Portland, and Jack never seemed to have any problem finding a pilot who would fly him over the mountain (I believe Steve Graham, who was a private pilot in addition to being bureau news editor, took him up several times).

Smith took aerial photos almost daily when the volcano first erupted in a series of small volcanic explosions and pyroclastic flows.

He was one of the first photographers, if not the first, who captured the huge killer clouds of rock and ash when it blew up two months later on the morning of May 18, 1980.

-0-

[Steve Graham](#) - Jack Smith and I arrived at the Portland, Ore. bureau more or less simultaneously about 1976, I as news editor and he as the bureau's first photographer.

It was not only the photos that Jack took himself that made him memorable. His organization of local stringers and personal contact with member photographers made for a photo report second to none.

Nothing demonstrated his organizational abilities more than the cataclysmic eruption on Mount St. Helens in March of 1980. The mountain had been emitting spurts of ash and gases before the big eruption on March 27th.

Although St. Helens is in Washington state, it's just across the Columbia River from Portland where the airport was closed by the blast as were the car rental agencies that didn't want their vehicles ingesting the ash in the air. Incoming AP photographers had to fly into Eugene and drive to Portland. Because they were unfamiliar with the area, Jack had to organize their activities as well.

But Mount St. Helens wasn't the only memorable event in Jack's career.

On Dec. 28, 1978, a United Airlines DC-8 crash-landed in a suburban Portland neighborhood after the captain let it run out of fuel while he dithered over a perceived landing gear problem. Jack got there while the survivors were still exiting the smoking hulk and shot memorable photos.

One of Jack's favorite stories was how a policeman demanded to see a press pass and Jack said he told the cop, "You can't ask for what you don't give out" and barged right into the crash site. (Portland still doesn't issue press passes).

We were friends outside of the office as well. Jack often invited my wife Karen and me out on his sailboat in the Columbia and we got together often.

Ken Conway and Tom Harrigan

[John Rogers](#) - Like others, I was startled when I saw retired AP newsman Ken Conway's name in the list of people who had passed in 2022, as I hadn't seen an obituary on him. Glad to see that's been taken care of now.

When I arrived at the AP's Los Angeles bureau in 1987 Ken was the night filer, a job that's obsolete now but was of utmost importance when the AP still had many member newspaper editors on slow-speed wires. It was his job to move stories important to each one of them up and down in the wire que to make sure they all got them in time for that night's newspaper deadline.

But he did far more than just that important juggling act. In the days when almost every AMs story had to be turned for PMs, he was a master at that, handling close to a dozen in his "free time" every night and making many of them tighter, brighter and ready to be easily led again the next morning if the story continued to develop.

As Linda Deutsch noted the other day, he was also an airplane enthusiast, a valuable trait for me when he had to take dictation from me each night I covered the crash of an airliner that had been brought down along the central California coast in December 1987 by a disgruntled ex-employee who smuggled a gun aboard and killed the pilots. There was no cellphone service along the central coast in those days and updates had to be called in from the phones in the barns of friendly farmers, pay phones at the hotel where the NTSB investigators were staying or even the tiny airport. Ken took one of those calls from me as an airliner was taking off and I had to scream my words into a pay phone to be heard by Ken, who was unflappable as always and even guessed, accurately as I recall, what kind of plane it was.

On major election nights he was also a key figure. In those days you always needed a couple of runners to take care of errands, and Ken, with his large number of kids, could always provide one or two who were happy to make a few extra bucks. Like Linda Deutsch and Paul Simon have noted, he was a quiet guy, great at his job, always friendly. When I worked nights he introduced me to the Mexican restaurant across the street, where he had dinner almost every night and where everybody knew his name. It was the only place that stayed open late in what was then a very questionable neighborhood. Fortunately, neither of us were there the night a couple guys with guns came in to stick it up.

When I saw Ken's name here the irony struck me that he died in the same year as Tom Harrigan, who was the day filer to Ken's night filer when I joined the AP. I spent all of the '90s on other AP assignments in New York and Missouri, and when I returned to LA at the end of 1999 Ken had retired but Tom was still there, having moved to a swing-shift reporter position that he truly embraced.

He was one of those guys you could throw a breaking story on anything to at 4 p.m. and he'd quickly find the official sources to match it before they all went home for the day. As retired LA Bureau Chief Andy Lippman noted recently, he had a heart of gold that he sometimes tried to hide under a grumpy exterior. He also had a subtle sense of humor that could include sometimes bursting into song at crazy moments, often after he arrived at work early in the morning.

One time I happened to be there when he began his rendition of "Amazing Grace" and I decided to join him. He seemed impressed that I knew the words. Everyone else, as I recall, demanded that we never do that again, noting one off-key version was enough to hear early in the morning, there was no need for a duet. He enjoyed that.

AP names four new Assistant News Directors

A note to staff Wednesday from [Josh Hoffner](#), AP national news director:

The AP's ability to execute a fast, ambitious, tenacious and all-formats news report in the U.S. requires a dynamic and talented team of newsroom leaders, video journalists, photographers and reporters. We are thrilled to announce several promotions and hires that will allow us to implement this vision as we enter the new year full of so much promise for the U.S. news report.

We are naming four new Assistant News Directors today, in what will be the first of many exciting job announcements in 2023 as we bolster our journalistic firepower around the U.S. You will receive more announcements in the coming weeks as we finish hiring the other nine Assistant News Directors, assignment managers and VJs, photographers and reporters all around the country. Some of those initial hires of field journalists are outlined below.

The Assistant News Director is vital leadership position that is truly the engine behind our breaking news prowess across the 50-state footprint. They will now oversee reporters, VJs and photographers in their states, driving the coverage in all formats and allowing us to own every big story in a way that no other news organization can match.

We are incredibly excited about this first group of hires and the ones that will follow in the coming weeks. They bring a range of experiences, talents and format expertise that will serve the AP well.

Adam Kealoha Causey is the Assistant News Director for Texas and Oklahoma. Adam is a terrific leader who has led the coverage of too many big stories to count in his time in Texas as news editor, including the mass killings in Uvalde this year and in El Paso in 2019, subfreezing temperatures that collapsed the Texas power grid and a novel abortion law that virtually ended the procedure. Before becoming news editor, he was administrative correspondent in Oklahoma City and West Desk editor in Phoenix. Adam is a proud member of AAJA and NLGJA, where he has become a trusted mentor to many colleagues over the years. Adam will remain based in Dallas.

Gilly Flaccus is the Assistant News Director for the Pacific Northwest (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska and Hawaii). You will be hard-pressed to find a journalist at the AP who is more tenacious, beloved by her colleagues and versatile in the various formats than Gilly. She has worked in Portland, Los Angeles and Orange County in her 22 years at AP, covering major stories including Hurricane Katrina, mass shootings in Arizona, Colorado and California and protests in Portland. She was part of the first class of AP reporters trained in video and for more than a decade has used those skills repeatedly on spot news and enterprise. She was part of AP's Future Leaders program in 2015 and been a mentor to many colleagues. Gilly will remain based in Portland.

Amy Forliti is the Assistant News Director for the Midwest (Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri): Amy is also a veteran AP

reporter who is revered by her colleagues around the country for both her reporting acumen and being the ultimate team-first co-worker who jumps in on any story. Forliti joined the AP in 1999 in Indianapolis, then became supervisory correspondent in Rhode Island, where she led coverage of one of the deadliest fires in recent U.S. history -- the Station nightclub blaze that killed 100 people. As a reporter in Minneapolis, Amy has been an integral part of AP's coverage of the George Floyd killing and resulting protests. She helped break the news that four Minneapolis police officers had been charged in Floyd's death was lead reporter on the trial of Derek Chauvin, the officer convicted in Floyd's murder. She will remain based in Minneapolis.

Roger Schneider is the Assistant News Director for the Great Lakes (Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin). Roger has been a news editor since 2005 and knows this territory better than anyone at the AP, having worked in Milwaukee, Detroit and Chicago. Roger is a veteran journalist who has led coverage of everything from Detroit's historic bankruptcy and the Flint water crisis to the failed plot to kidnap the Michigan governor and the July Fourth parade shooting in his hometown of Highland Park, Illinois. In a testament to Roger's willingness to plunge into the big story, he abandoned his vacation during the Highland Park shooting and rushed to the scene, going live on Bambuser on his iPhone, before shifting into the role of editor in directing the coverage. He will remain based in Chicago.

Please join me in congratulating Adam, Gilly, Amy and Roger and stay tuned for the next batch of assistant news director announcements.

I also wanted to give a quick update on hiring for other positions. We are in the process of hiring video journalists in 10 cities, along with photographers in Seattle, Buffalo and Nashville and reporters in New York, Iowa, Texas and Sacramento. Here are our first hires, with many more to come later this month.

Hilary Powell is joining the Richmond bureau as a VJ after nearly three years in the Washington, D.C. bureau. Hilary has been on the front lines of many breaking news stories in her time in Washington, most notably the protests at Black Lives Matter Plaza in 2020. She will be a great addition to the Virginia and Mid-South team when she starts in Richmond next month.

Tass Vejpongsa is joining the Philadelphia bureau as a VJ. Tass has been a stalwart VJ for a number of years for the AP in Asia and we cannot wait for her to join the U.S. ranks later this spring.

Ty O'Neil started this week in Las Vegas as a VJ. Ty has worked as a videographer, freelance photojournalist and reporter in Nevada and is a trained wildland firefighter, a skillset that will come in handy in our visual coverage of fires in the West.

Mike Pesoli is our new VJ in Washington, D.C. Mike was an intern in WDC last year and started last month in his new role.

They join other new hires we have made in recent weeks across the U.S., including Las Vegas reporter Rio Yamat, Baltimore reporter Lea Skene and Chicago photographer Erin Hooley. We have also begun to build out the law enforcement team under Mike Balsamo, with Alanna Durkin Richer in Boston, Claudia Lauer in Philadelphia and

Lindsay Whitehurst in Washington now reporting to Mike and already doing outstanding work.

Congrats again to everyone and thanks for your patience during this transition period. Stay tuned for future updates.

A magical moment in our lives



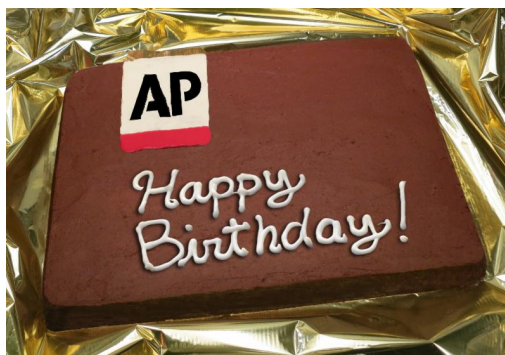
Paul and Linda Stevens – The highlight of our 40th anniversary trip to Italy in 2008 was the chance to shake the hand and introduce ourselves to Pope Benedict XVI during the Wednesday papal audience in St. Peter's Square. Later that day, we had dinner with retired AP Rome chief of bureau Victor Simpson and his wife Daniela before launching out for 10 days of train touring throughout Italy. Like the rest of the world, we mourn Benedict's death – the pope emeritus died Dec. 31 at the age of 95. His funeral service was held this morning.

Surprise visit from snowy owl



Nick Ut - A snowy owl made a surprise visit to the Southern California city of Cypress, located southeast of Los Angeles in Orange County. Excited neighbors and birders gathered to observe the raptor, which found accommodations on rooftops in a residential area.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Colleen Barry](#)

[David Bauder](#)

[Bill Brown](#)

[Steve Kent](#)

[John Solomon](#)

[Adam Yeomans](#)

Stories of interest

Nate Thayer, journalist who landed Pol Pot interview, dies at 62 (New York Times)

By Brian Murphy

Nate Thayer, an American journalist who chased stories of conflict across the jungles of Southeast Asia and was the last Western correspondent to interview the Khmer Rouge's genocidal leader Pol Pot, has died at his home in Falmouth, Mass. He was 62.

Robert Thayer said his brother's body was found Jan. 3, but it was not immediately clear when he died. Mr. Thayer wrote last year that he was in declining health, including developing sepsis after foot surgery and was told by doctors he "will never walk again."

During decades of reporting beginning in the late 1980s, Mr. Thayer cultivated a reputation as a freelancer willing to endure hardships and risks to track down far-flung

stories for outlets including Soldier of Fortune magazine, the Far Eastern Economic Review, the Associated Press and The Washington Post.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Robert Reid.

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Opinion: How did politics get so awful? I blame MTV circa 1992. (Washington Post)

By Jim Geraghty

Jim Geraghty is the senior political correspondent of National Review.

Everyone has a theory about why American politics today is so awful.

I blame MTV.

More specifically, I blame the music channel's "Rock the Vote" campaign in the early 1990s. That's the moment when the tastemakers of popular culture decided the widespread perception that politics isn't cool was a problem to be solved. Politics had to be made cool. And therefore not boring.

Call today's politics whatever you like, but it isn't boring. I can hear the defenses of "Rock the Vote": That's unfair! Politics and entertainment have long overlapped — even Richard M. Nixon was on "Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In" in 1968 saying "Sock it to me?"

But there's a difference between politicians trying to be entertaining and politicians seeing their role as primarily being an entertainer. Here's where "Rock the Vote" comes in. The organization by that name, founded in 1990 by a music industry executive to combat censorship of song lyrics, teamed up with MTV ahead of the 1990 midterms to get out the youth vote. But the campaign didn't fully kick into gear until two years later, with the goal of persuading young voters to take a break from obsessing over Mariah Carey and Boyz II Men and actually care about voting for Bill Clinton.

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

-0-

Former CNN Digital Chief Named Publisher of Atlanta Journal-Constitution (New York Times)

By Benjamin Mullin

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution announced on Wednesday that Andrew Morse, an architect of the shuttered CNN+ streaming service, would be its new president and

publisher.

Mr. Morse, a longtime digital news executive whose career has included stops at Bloomberg Media and ABC News, will start on Monday.

“As the largest newspaper in the South, we’ve got an active audience in a part of the country that is at the center of a lot of important stories,” Mr. Morse said. “I think we have the ability to be an essential source of news not just for Atlanta but for the South.”

Mr. Morse, 48, joins The Atlanta Journal-Constitution amid a crisis in local news. More than 2,500 newspapers across the United States have closed over the last two decades, as revenue from print advertising dwindles, leaving one-fifth of Americans with limited access to local news.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen.

Today in History - Jan. 5, 2023



Today is Thursday, Jan. 5, the fifth day of 2023. There are 360 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 5, 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed assistance to countries to help them resist Communist aggression in what became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine.

On this date:

In 1896, an Austrian newspaper, Wiener Presse, reported the discovery by German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen (RENT'-gun) of a type of radiation that came to be known as X-rays.

In 1914, auto industrialist Henry Ford announced he was going to pay workers \$5 for an 8-hour day, as opposed to \$2.34 for a 9-hour day. (Employees still worked six days a week; the 5-day work week was instituted in 1926.)

In 1925, Democrat Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming took office as America's first female governor, succeeding her late husband, William, following a special election.

In 1933, construction began on the Golden Gate Bridge. (Work was completed four years later.)

In 1943, educator and scientist George Washington Carver, who was born into slavery, died in Tuskegee, Alabama, at about age 80.

In 1949, in his State of the Union address, President Harry S. Truman labeled his administration the Fair Deal.

In 1953, Samuel Beckett's two-act tragicomedy "Waiting for Godot," considered a classic of the Theater of the Absurd, premiered in Paris.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon announced that he had ordered development of the space shuttle.

In 1994, Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, former speaker of the House of Representatives, died in Boston at age 81.

In 1998, Sonny Bono, the 1960s pop star-turned-politician, was killed when he struck a tree while skiing at the Heavenly Ski Resort on the Nevada-California state line; he was 62.

In 2004, foreigners arriving at U.S. airports were photographed and had their fingerprints scanned in the start of a government effort to keep terrorists out of the country.

In 2011, John Boehner (BAY'-nur) was elected speaker as Republicans regained control of the House of Representatives on the first day of the new Congress.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama hailed a last-minute deal with Congress that pulled the country back from the "fiscal cliff," but warned in his Saturday radio and Internet address that he would not compromise over his insistence that lawmakers lift the federal debt ceiling.

Five years ago: Former Fox News Channel anchor and 1989 Miss America Gretchen Carlson was named chairwoman of the Miss America Organization's board of directors, with three other past pageant winners joining her on the board. In the first Rose Bowl to go into overtime, Georgia advanced to college football's national championship game with a 54-48 win over Oklahoma. Alabama advanced by beating top-ranked Clemson, 24-6, in the Sugar Bowl. Peter Martins, the longtime leader of the New York City Ballet, announced his retirement in the midst of an investigation into accusations of sexual misconduct. California launched legal sales of recreational marijuana, with customers linking up early for ribbon cuttings and promotions.

One year ago: Australia denied entry to tennis star Novak Djokovic, who was seeking to play for a 10th Australian Open title later in the month; authorities canceled his visa because he failed to meet the requirements for an exemption to COVID-19

vaccination rules. (Djokovic, a vocal skeptic of vaccines, would be confined to an immigration detention hotel as he began a court fight that eventually proved unsuccessful.) After being held out of the team's first 35 games because he refused to get vaccinated, Kyrie Irving scored 22 points for the Brooklyn Nets in his first game of the season as the team beat the Indiana Pacers 129-121 on the road; he was still unable to play in New York because of his vaccination status. The Grammy Awards ceremony in Los Angeles, scheduled for Jan. 31st, was postponed due to what organizers called "too many risks" from the omicron variant of the coronavirus. (It would be rescheduled for early April in Las Vegas.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Robert Duvall is 92. Juan Carlos, former King of Spain, is 85. Singer-musician Athol Guy (The Seekers) is 83. Former talk show host Charlie Rose is 81. Actor-director Diane Keaton is 77. Actor Ted Lange (lanj) is 75. R&B musician George "Funky" Brown (Kool and the Gang) is 74. Rock musician Chris Stein (Blondie) is 73. Former CIA Director George Tenet is 70. Actor Pamela Sue Martin is 70. Actor Clancy Brown is 64. Singer Iris Dement is 62. Actor Suzy Amis is 61. Actor Ricky Paull Goldin is 58. Actor Vinnie Jones is 58. Rock musician Kate Schellenbach (Luscious Jackson) is 57. Actor Joe Flanigan is 56. Talk show host/dancer-choreographer Carrie Ann Inaba is 55. Rock musician Troy Van Leeuwen (Queens of the Stone Age) is 55. Actor Heather Paige Kent is 54. Rock singer Marilyn Manson is 54. Actor Shea Whigham is 54. Actor Derek Cecil is 50. Actor-comedian Jessica Chaffin is 49. Actor Bradley Cooper is 48. Actor January Jones is 45. Actor Brooklyn Sudano is 42. Actor Franz Drameh is 30.

Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that focuses on retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013 and past issues can be found by clicking [Connecting Archive](#) in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career 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!

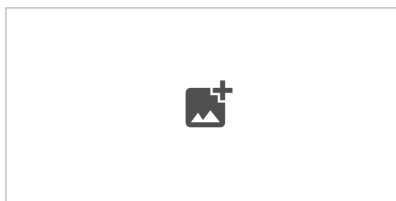


Here are some suggestions:

- **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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