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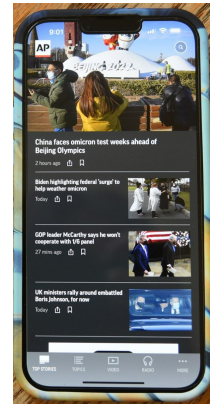
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# Connecting

Jan. 25, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this Jan. 25, 2023,

For the first time in a week or more, Connecting does not have a story of working relief jobs in the AP - although yours is welcomed if you wish to come ahead.

However, our colleague [Josh Hoffner](#), AP National News director, provides some background on the present-day situation with temporary jobs. He shares:

“On what we currently do with temporary legislative coverage: The temp role has evolved. Now we have a partnership with Report for America that has allowed us to hire 16 reporters in statehouses for two-year assignments. Current locations are California, Colorado, Nevada, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, New York, South Carolina, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Mississippi, Oregon and Pennsylvania. This is our second group of reporters under this program. Our first statehouse team started in 2020 and wrapped up last year. Many of them are now full-time AP employees, covering everything from Congress and statehouses in places

like Salt Lake City, Baton Rouge, West Virginia, Austin. Others went to full-time roles on the digital team.

“Report for America is a nonprofit dedicated to preserving and sustaining local reporting. AP has had a relationship with them for more than five years, and with the new cohort, has hosted a total of 35 journalists under the program.

“It is true that we have not done vacation relief for quite some time. We did do legislative relief up until about four or five years ago. My main issue was the notion that it’s been 25 years since we had temporary legislative reporters when we had them fairly recently. And of course, what are doing now with Report for America is very comparable.”

Today’s issue brings news of the creation of a position – AP vice president of news for digital platforms – and the appointment of **Saeed Ahmed** as the first to take the position.

There’s major significance here as the AP looks to bolster its consumer traffic and make advertising a more substantial part of its revenue stream.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

## Saeed Ahmed named VP of news for digital platforms

By Nicole Meir

In a memo to staff on Tuesday, Senior Vice President and Executive Editor Julie Pace announced that Saeed Ahmed has been named AP’s first vice president of news for digital platforms:

I am thrilled to announce that Saeed Ahmed, an innovative and highly experienced digital news leader, is joining the AP as our first vice president of news for digital platforms. In this senior leadership role, Saeed will lead our efforts to deepen engagement with audiences on APNews, social media and other emerging digital platforms, with the goal of bringing AP’s world class journalism to more people, in more modern ways.

Saeed is uniquely positioned to lead this important area of growth for AP and oversee our expanding digital team. He joins us from BBC, where he served as head of



digital journalism, tasked with expanding the outlet's reach in North America. He was previously director of digital news for NPR and assistant managing editor for digital at CNN, where he led a content diversity initiative and launched the top newsletters in CNN's portfolio: 5 Things and The Good Stuff.

Saeed is passionate about newsroom diversity and inclusive storytelling. He'll also bring a global perspective to his new role; he was born in Bangladesh, raised in the United Arab Emirates and came to the U.S. to attend Morehouse College.

Saeed starts on Feb. 6. He'll initially commute between New York and Washington while he wraps up a teaching stint at Georgetown University. After the semester ends, he'll work from New York headquarters. I know he's eager to meet staff there, and in locations around the world.

Please join me in welcoming Saeed to the AP!

Click [here](#) to view story.

## Axios Exclusive: AP goes after ads with website redesign

By Sara Fischer, Axios

The Associated Press has hired a new leader to oversee the development of its digital presence as it looks to bolster its consumer traffic and make advertising a more substantial part of its revenue stream, its executive editor Julie Pace and chief revenue officer Kristin Heitmann told Axios.

Why it matters: "Most people interact with our content through other news organizations, and that's the core of our business," Pace said. But furthering AP's direct relationship with consumers through digital products presents an enormous growth opportunity, she added.

By the numbers: The nonprofit news agency makes the vast majority of its revenue (82%) from licensing its stories to other newsrooms. Less than 10% today comes from advertising.

"Global digital advertising revenue has grown substantially in recent years, and projections show that — despite recent pressures — digital advertising will dominate in the future," Heitmann said. "Our customers already generate income this way, and so must we."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Peggy Walsh.

## Julie Wright named state government news editor for U.S. News

**In a note to staff Tuesday, Sarah Rafi, Deputy U.S. News Director, Reporting Teams, Chicago, announced:**

I am very happy to announce [Julie Wright](#)'s appointment as State Government News Editor for U.S. News, our point person for working with statehouse reporters to identify and connect the dots of the biggest themes emerging from state capitols nationwide.

Julie joined the AP as Missouri/Kansas news editor in 2015, since which time she has led coverage of stories ranging from the rise and fall of ex-Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens to Kansas voters' surprise vote to protect abortion rights, as well as worked regularly with the broad state government and politics teams. Colleagues will attest that Julie has routinely stepped up to collaborate, offering surefooted leadership and discerning news judgment. Prior to joining AP, she led newsrooms and coverage teams for the World Company in Kansas, The Anchorage Daily News in Alaska and the Star Tribuneap.org in Minnesota.



Julie remains committed in her new role to bringing journalists together on shared initiatives and helping them grow along the way. She is eager to build even greater cross-format and cross-team collaboration in AP's state government coverage, with plans to draw on the expertise and resources of other existing coverage teams to ensure our reporting highlights the depth and breadth of AP's unmatched footprint. And she looks forward to continuing the work she has started as a state leader to prioritize all-formats at the start of any newsgathering discussion.

Please join me in congratulating Julie as she takes on her new role, which begins immediately.

## Those were the days – recalling fellow writers



**Gordon Glover left, and Norm Abelson at his granddaughter's wedding.**

**Norm Abelson** - The longer one lives, the more memories pile up and recur, especially about those folks no longer around to share them with. The other day I was reminiscing about those, now gone, from my years in journalism, going back some 70 years.

### **COPY BOY, BOSTON AP BUREAU**

Joe Kelley and Jimmy Calligero, I call them my nighttime good guys. My first job at The AP was as swing-shift copy boy. That meant I had different hours each day, including one night shift and one overnight.

Joe was night editor, and during slow times would give me assignments of minor stories, like obits and local sports events. At first, he'd edit my stuff, and explain my errors. Soon, he started putting a few pieces on the e-wire. Always he was patient and friendly. And always a hell of a good guy.

Jimmie had the overnight, and was not always happy about it. At times he came in without having slept, and took a nap, stretched out on a desk. He said I could answer the phone and, unless it was a major piece, I could take notes. Later, he let me take a whack at writing the story. Then he'd edit me and put the piece on the wire. Jimmy was doing a lot more than just resting. He was giving me a chance to hone my skills.

Frank Murphy, AP day editor in Boston, had a booming voice always laced with a long string of curses. The sharpest of them were often aimed at hapless copy boys like me. My attitude toward him was a combination of fear and dislike. With time, though, it softened when I recalled that he assigned me my first by-lined piece when I was still a lowly copy boy. And, there was that time he trusted me to cover a major press

interview with hospitalized TV legend Arthur Godfrey. Hey, maybe Frank wasn't such a bad guy after all.

Who can forget the only female reporter in Boston's AP newsroom, the so-called society, or women's, editor. There she sat, always neatly done up, topped by a pert hat, a cigarette dangling between her lips. During my copy boy days, she always treated me with kindness and thoughtfulness.

Her name reflected the way she calmly presented herself amidst the shouting and cursing bouncing around the newsroom. It was Miss Mary Prim.

### **STAFF WRITER, AUGUSTA, MAINE**

Bob Crocker and Bill Langzettel were my editors during my first AP writing assignment – part of the team covering the 1953 session of the Maine legislature. Bob, the Augusta correspondent, was a quiet and reserved man, always patient with my early – and far from ideal – efforts. Guessing that I was lonely being away from home and family for the first time, he would stop to chat with me, and he invited me to dinner at his home on several occasions.

Bill, a gruff former merchant seaman who didn't suffer fools (or bad writing) gladly, was a tougher but no less effective teacher. At first, he scared the hell out of me as he blue-penciled his way through my copy. Then one night he left me pretty discouraged after paring away about 90 per cent from a piece I'd written. Later he came up to me and said words to this effect: “Don't worry kid; you'll be okay. Want to come join me for some Chinese food?”

### **AP WRITER, CONCORD, N.H.**

Jack Maloy was a dear and respected friend – a true intellectual with a waggish sense of humor. We shared a working-class mentality with a suspicion of the bosses, and a love of words, both reading and expressing them. The day he and his lovely wife Rosemary and family left Concord for a new job was, for me, one of sadness and loss. He was off to a new assignment at UP's Albany, N.Y. bureau. Oh, did I tell you Jack was a United Press reporter and my “opposition” as an AP guy.

We had a secret pact, which I guess it's O.K. to get off my chest now. Each of us carried around a lot more pounds than we should, and got winded rushing from a State House assignment back about a half mile to file our stories (We both were in the same building). Here's the confession: To avoid the rushing, we would each wait five minutes for the slower guy before starting to punch our, usually mundane, story. Opposition is one thing; a possible heart attack is another.

I'd give a lot once more to be sitting at Jack's kitchen table, talking politics, books and the world in general, while happily downing a few cold ones.

Joe Kamin and Gordon Glover, each in his own way, managed to be both my good buddies and patient teachers. Joe taught me most of what I know about being a good reporter. When he left his post as Concord correspondent for a position at Bowdoin College, I fully expected to succeed him. Well, instead I was passed over for some guy from the Portland AP office. Angry and disappointed, I was fully prepared to be

professional with the new man, but to do little more. Instead, we became a damn fine team. My new boss, Gordon, also turned out to be one of the finest and most decent persons I have ever known. We remained close – and, yes, loving – friends for the next 50-plus years.

I keep a photo of Gordon and me, sitting side-by-side in our later years, opposite the computer, in my writing room. I gaze at it each morning before I type out my first word of the day. I'll never forget that man

All of these people remain alive in, and enrich, my memory.

## 'Mistuh Sewell, you're writing my obituary, aren't you?'

**Dan Sewell** - Dennis Conrad's mention of covering segregationist former Georgia Gov. Lester Maddox within his item on Jane Fonda on Tuesday reminded me of when I was working out of the Atlanta bureau in 1996. I believe it was ACOB David Simpson who was taking inventory on the preparedness needs.

He asked me if I could get prep done on Maddox, then 81. I set up an interview at his home, and within a few minutes of questions, he stopped me and demanded: "Mistuh Sewell, you're writing my obituary, aren't you?"

I kind of mumbled my way through a response, but actually wound up doing a story about how Maddox and Hosea Williams, a former MLK activist who had gotten extreme, represented an Atlanta "odd couple" that the city would like to keep hidden away while in the global spotlight during the upcoming Summer Olympics.

As it turned out, it was another 7 years before The AP needed that Maddox prep.

## The AP Interview: Pope says homosexuality not a crime



**Pope Francis speaks during an interview with The Associated Press at the Vatican, Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2023. Francis acknowledged that Catholic bishops in some parts of the world support laws that criminalize homosexuality or discriminate against the LGBTQ community, and he himself referred to homosexuality in terms of "sin." But he attributed attitudes to culture backgrounds, and said bishops in particular need to undergo a process of change to recognize the dignity of everyone. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)**

**By NICOLE WINFIELD**

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis criticized laws that criminalize homosexuality as “unjust,” saying God loves all his children just as they are and called on Catholic bishops who support the laws to welcome LGBTQ people into the church.

“Being homosexual isn’t a crime,” Francis said during an exclusive interview Tuesday with The Associated Press.

Francis acknowledged that Catholic bishops in some parts of the world support laws that criminalize homosexuality or discriminate against the LGBTQ community, and he himself referred to the issue in terms of “sin.” But he attributed such attitudes to cultural backgrounds, and said bishops in particular need to undergo a process of change to recognize the dignity of everyone.

“These bishops have to have a process of conversion,” he said, adding that they should apply “tenderness, please, as God has for each one of us.”

Francis’ comments are the first uttered by a pope about such laws, but they are consistent with his overall approach to the LGBTQ community and belief that the Catholic Church should welcome everyone and not discriminate.

Read more [here](#).



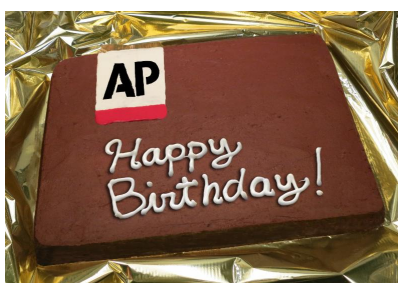
# Vietnamese New Year





**Nick Ut** - I am here in Saigon for Vietnamese New Year (Tet ) pictures Vietnamese at Chinatown, Chinese Pagoda, hundreds Vietnamese pray for good luck.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



**John Gibbons**

# Stories of interest

## *Washington Post lays off 20 newsroom employees*

(Washington Post)

By Sarah Ellison and Elahe Izadi

The Washington Post laid off 20 staffers Tuesday, the latest in a series of media and technology companies to cut jobs in the face of a challenging economic climate and continuing declines in advertising revenue and readership.

In addition to eliminating those 20 positions, the company will also keep another 30 vacancies unfilled — altogether, numbers smaller than many had expected. In mid-December, publisher Fred Ryan told staff that the company would eliminate a “single-digit percentage” of its 2,500-person staff because it “cannot keep investing resources in initiatives that do not meet our customers’ needs.”

As part of the layoffs, The Post will discontinue its video game and esports section, Launcher, which debuted in 2019, as well as KidsPost, a long-running news and features section aimed at children.

Read more [here](#).

Click [here](#) for New York Times story. Shared by Sibby Christensen.

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## *The Billionaire Era in News is Fizzling* (Semafor)

By BEN SMITH

Starting a decade ago, a generation of new-money billionaires rode to the rescue of American journalism:

2013: Amazon founder Jeff Bezos bought the Washington Post in 2013 for \$250 million

2014: eBay founder Pierre Omidyar granted First Look Media, including The Intercept, \$250 million

2017: Apple billionaire Laurene Powell Jobs bought 70% of The Atlantic in a deal valuing the company at about \$160 million, according to a person close to the deal

2018: Biotech billionaire Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong bought assets including the Los Angeles Times for \$500 million

2018: Salesforce Founder Marc Benioff bought Time for \$190 million

The new owners promised both to support the journalism and help revolutionize business models.

Read more [here](#). Shared by John Brewer.

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## ***Opinion Mike Pompeo's revolting embrace of MBS after the Khashoggi murder*** (Washington Post)

**By the Editorial Board**

Former secretary of state Mike Pompeo comes out spitting nails in his new book, which is presumably a prelude to a run for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination. But his commentary on the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, a Post contributing columnist, reveals much more about Mr. Pompeo than his critics. It shows that, rather than acting as a principled leader of U.S. diplomacy, Mr. Pompeo coddled the person who sent the Khashoggi hit squad.

Mr. Khashoggi was suffocated and dismembered with a bone saw inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul on Oct. 2, 2018. The 15 killers included seven members of the elite personal protective detail of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, known as MBS, who, according to the U.S. intelligence community, "approved an operation" to "capture or kill" Khashoggi. His body has never been found.

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

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## ***Informed app attracts big-name publishers to join curated subscription bundle*** (PressGazette)

**By Charlotte Tobitt**

A new app bundling together curated stories from some of the world's biggest publishers is targeting consumers who, its founders believe, would never pay for a single news subscription.

The co-founders of Informed are targeting news consumers who have "not enough time, [are] not reading that many articles, overwhelmed by the sheer amount that's out there" and want the best, most important stories cherry-picked for them. So as distinct from existing news bundlers, like PressReader, Informed does not offer full access to particular titles.

Co-founder Martin Kaelble told Press Gazette their offering would not take people away from existing news publishers' subscriptions.

This means Informed is not for, as Kaelble put it, “news junkies” or “content nerds” who will prefer to have their own subscriptions and access to a full newspaper.

“It sounds a bit romantic, but we want to save quality journalism,” he said.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Two Seattle Asian American community newspapers go out of print*** (Crosscut)

by Maleeha Syed

The final print editions of Northwest Asian Weekly and the Seattle Chinese Post published Thursday, marking the end of an era for longtime readers who relied on the papers for news about the city’s Asian American communities.

In December, the papers’ leadership announced plans to sunset the print and online versions of the Seattle Chinese Post, a Chinese-language newspaper that publisher Assunta Ng founded in 1982 with the city’s immigrant population in mind. It was very hard for people who didn’t speak the language or understand the culture, said Ng, who was born in China and raised in Hong Kong.

A year after she started the Post, Ng founded Northwest Asian Weekly, an English-language sister publication. With a younger, more racially diverse readership than the Post, the Weekly will stop printing, but continue publishing online.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Betty Pizac.

## Today in History - Jan. 25, 2023



Today is Wednesday, Jan. 25, the 25th day of 2023. There are 340 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Jan. 25, 1945, the World War II Battle of the Bulge ended as German forces were pushed back to their original positions.

**On this date:**

In 1533, England's King Henry VIII secretly married his second wife, Anne Boleyn, who later gave birth to Elizabeth I.

In 1915, America's first official transcontinental telephone call took place as Alexander Graham Bell, who was in New York, spoke to his former assistant, Thomas Watson, who was in San Francisco, over a line set up by American Telephone & Telegraph.

In 1924, the first Winter Olympic Games opened in Chamonix (shah-moh-NEE'), France.

In 1945, Grand Rapids, Michigan, became the first community to add fluoride to its public water supply.

In 1971, Charles Manson and three women followers were convicted in Los Angeles of murder and conspiracy in the 1969 slayings of seven people, including actor Sharon Tate.

In 1981, the 52 Americans held hostage by Iran for 444 days arrived in the United States.

In 1993, Sears announced that it would no longer publish its famous century-old catalog.

In 1994, maintaining his innocence, singer Michael Jackson settled a child molestation lawsuit against him; terms were confidential, although the monetary figure was reportedly \$22 million.

In 2004, NASA's Opportunity rover zipped its first pictures of Mars to Earth, showing a surface smooth and dark red in some places, and strewn with fragmented slabs of light bedrock in others.

In 2020, President Donald Trump's defense team opened its arguments at his first Senate impeachment trial, casting the effort to remove him from office as a politically motivated attempt to subvert the 2016 election and the upcoming 2020 contest. Canada, Australia and Malaysia each reported their first cases of the new coronavirus.

Ten years ago: The U.S. Department of Education declared that students with disabilities had to be given a fair shot to play on a traditional sports team or have their own leagues. Thousands of anti-abortion demonstrators marched through Washington to the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court to protest the landmark decision that legalized abortion.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump arrived at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland; after meeting there with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump threatened to cut off U.S. aid to the Palestinians unless they negotiated peace

with Israel. In an interview in InStyle magazine, Oprah Winfrey said she was not interested in a presidential bid, adding that she doesn't "have the DNA" for a White House run.

One year ago: A man was found clinging to the hull of an overturned 25-foot boat off Florida; he was the only known survivor from what he said was a group of 40 migrants who had set out for Florida from a chain of islands in the Bahamas. The Navy said it had discharged 23 active-duty sailors for refusing the coronavirus vaccine; it marked the first time the Navy had thrown currently-serving sailors out of the military over the mandatory shots. David Ortiz was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in his first turn on the ballot, while steroid-tainted stars Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens were denied entry to Cooperstown in their final year under consideration by the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

Today's birthdays: Country singer Claude Gray is 91. Actor Leigh Taylor-Young is 79. Actor Jenifer Lewis is 66. Country musician R&B singer Kina is 54. Actor China Kantner is 52. Actor Ana Ortiz is 53. Drummer Joe Sirois (sih-ROYS') (Mighty Mighty Bosstones) is 51. Musician Matt Odmark (OHD'-mark) (Jars of Clay) is 49. Actor Mia Kirshner is 48. Actor Christine Lakin is 44. R&B singer Alicia Keys is 43. Actor Michael Trevino is 38. Pop musician Calum Hood (5 Seconds of Summer) is 27. Actor Olivia Edward is 16.

## 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!



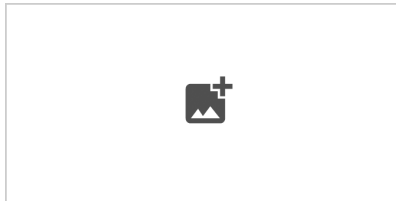
Here are some suggestions:

- **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  
[paulstevens46@gmail.com](mailto:paulstevens46@gmail.com)



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