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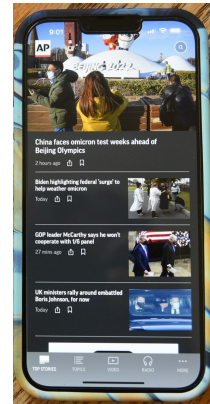
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Connecting

Feb. 8, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this Feb. 8, 2023,

Connecting colleague [Jim Spehar](#) offers an observation worth sharing:

I didn't know (never even heard of) Mike Tharp but Tracy Dahlby's obit (in Tuesday's issue) made me wish I had. Occurs to me her description of Tharp might be the best any of us who've ever carried one of those narrow pads and a pen, a tape recorder or a camera of any sort might wish applied to us.

"He was a professional listener with the unfaltering patience of a gem cutter, the bullshit detector of a great detective, and a low boil for the deceit and tomfoolery of the powerful and privileged."

DENNE FREEMAN SERVICES: A graveside service for our colleague Denne Freeman, longtime AP Dallas sports writer, will be held at 11:30 a.m., Saturday, February 11, at Oakwood Cemetery in Waco with Father James of St. Jerome Catholic Church officiating. Visitation will be from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m., February 10, at Wilkirson-Hatch-

Bailey Funeral Home, 6101 Bosque Blvd. in Waco. Denne died Feb. 3 at the age of 86. Click [here](#) for his obituary, which notes: Memorials may be made to the Texas Sports Hall of Fame, 1108 S University Parks Drive, Waco, TX 76706 or to St. Jerome Catholic Church, 9820 Chapel Rd. Woodway 76712. The family invites you to leave a message or memory on our "Tribute Wall" at www.WHBfamily.com.

SHORTCHANGING MAHOMES: In Tuesday's edition, I wrote that this Sunday's Super Bowl will be the second for Kansas City Chiefs' quarterback Patrick Mahomes in his young career. Colleagues **Doug Tucker** and [Kia Breaux](#) outpointed that it will be his third. Duly noted. Speaking of sports and Kia, however, she recently shared news that her older son John Randle has accepted academic and athletic scholarships to attend the University of Missouri-St. Louis, where he will play baseball.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Denne Freeman's prowess as bureau's pitcher

[Ken Herman](#) - Denne Freeman was a friendly and welcoming face when I joined the AP in Dallas in 1977. He was a pleasure to take post-game dictation from. Such a pro. Flawless. He gave a new, more positive meaning to the word dictator. I was amazed a human could do that at such a low stress level.

But, in addition to taking dictation from Denne from sports events he covered, I got to participate, on the field of play, with Denne in sports events. Denne was a pitcher on the bureau's slow-pitch softball team that competed in a Dallas-area media league. Our player-managers - self-appointed as I recall - were late greats Bill Barnard and Eloy Aguilar (who also played first base).

While serving as an AP team-building social activity, the softball games also became serious business. We were pretty good. (Funny how as the years go by, your long-ago athletic experiences seem better and better.) We had two major rivals. UPI wasn't much of a challenge. But there were heated contests with the now-defunct Dallas Times Herald. In those days, the AP Dallas Bureau was in the Times Herald's downtown office building, so we got to know those folks pretty well.

Any semblance of friendship dissipated on the softball field. This was war, slow-pitch style. The games would become heated to a level that would not be considered good membership by the New York execs.

It's been nice to hear from so many people who Denne impacted in so many positive ways. Heckuva nice guy in addition to being a journalism pro who earned his way into the Texas Sports Hall of Fame.

When justice prevails and a Dallas AP Softball Hall of Fame is established, I'd like to nominate Denne for membership (if that's OK with Eloy).

Joe Edwards a Swiss watch of a human being

[John Nolan](#) - Joe Edwards was unflappable, efficient -- and a Swiss watch of a human being. During the mid-1970s when I was beginning my AP career as a Nashville newsman, I marveled to see his daily routine. He consistently showed up precisely at the start of his scheduled shift and left as it was scheduled to end. That's a remarkable capability in any AP office.

Bill DiMascio, then Nashville's COB, hired me in 1976 to succeed Joe as sports editor, freeing Joe to do other things.

As Tennessee's broadcast editor, Joe's writing was a model of crispness. He efficiently handled breaking news while maintaining good relations with broadcast members -- who responded with a steady stream of news tips and actualities.

Joe's greatest legacy, though, was bringing authority to AP's coverage of country music. His Nashville Sound column became a weekly landmark on the A-wire.

Speaking of country music, here is a favorite among my memories of the usually even-keel Mr. Edwards:

He covered a Country Music Association awards event, during which a broadcast audience was treated to the costume-malfunction spectacle of Dolly Parton looking down and observing, "I've ripped my dress." Naturally, that featured prominently in the story Joe filed to New York.

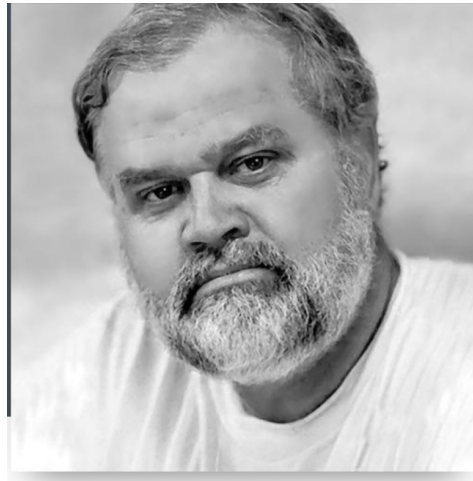
A particularly prudish General Desk editor deleted all reference to said quote. The result was a soulless lede that could have been written from outside the solar system, something along the lines of: Dolly Parton won two awards Tuesday night from the Country Music Association ... blah, blah, blah.

It's fair to say that Joe questioned NY Gen's judgment.

Former Cox Correspondent Jeff Nesmith To Be Remembered At National Press Club

In the near-extinct world of print journalism, there once were "reporter's reporters" -- those news gatherers who personified the best in the craft -- persistent in pursuit of the truth and faithful, always faithful, to the facts of a story. For more than four decades, Jeff Nesmith was such a reporter, an old-school "just-the-facts" newspaperman to the core, and his recent passing underscores just how few of his kind there were, even in the golden age of journalism. And if you ever were fortunate enough to share a by-line with Jeff, you experienced firsthand what a master of the craft he was. But Jeff was so much more than a "reporter's reporter." He was a gentle and mighty soul with an unbounded kindness and an incomparable love of life and a commitment to make the world a better place. Those of us who knew him and loved

him and worked side by side with him will gather Friday evening at the National Press Club to recount not just his journalism successes but also remember his many adventures – from the strawberry farms of the rural South to a Pulitzer Prize and the admiration of his peers. Jeff was always a delight to be with. How many people is that true of? The memory of that delight lessens the sting of his passing. That is his gift to those he leaves behind. That is his legacy as a “reporter’s reporter.” And, my God, what an abiding gift and legacy that is.



By [Scott Shepard](#) - Former reporter Cox Newspapers, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and The Associated Press.

Hollis Jefferson "Jeff" Nesmith, Jr., a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and author, passed away on January 13, 2023, after a brief illness. He was 82 and had lived a life full of exciting adventures, great stories and a lot of laughter. Click [here](#) for his obituary. Shared by Peggy Walsh.

Super Bowl memories

[Dan Sewell](#) - Here we are in Super Bowl week, and the recent passing of Denne Freeman and memories of Wick Temple got me thinking about my first and only Super Bowl: XIII in Miami, 1979.

I'm sure long-time AP sports writers have many more memories, but here's my one and only. I was in my first full year as sports writer in Miami, down the pecking order of others on The AP Super Bowl team, so I tried to come up with good sidebars.

One was an interview with Dolphins coach Don Shula, not involved with this one but an excellent source for championship game and Super Bowl memories including for his undefeated 1972 Dolphins.

Another was an interview with O.J. Simpson, who I had covered in Buffalo for AP the previous year and was in Miami to host the then-annual Saturday night variety show on network TV.

He invited me to join him for lunch at Miami's Jockey Club. Also at the table: Ted Knight, who amused us by doing his Ted Baxter voice from "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." And Art Metrano, a comedy writer/standup comedian.

On Saturday night, the press corps loaded into a bus and went to the NFL's pregame party in a Miami International Airport hangar. There was a little bit of everything: celebrities, NFL executives, politicians.

Two vivid memories:

Standing next to Howard Cosell as he leered at the young woman carrying around a cocktail tray and told her: "You have a very succulent lower lip." (She probably threw up a little bit in her mouth).

And, there was a bonafide Cuban cigar-roller, rolling up thick cigars upon request. On the way out for the evening, I grabbed a handful.

There was a large AP team at the game, too many to all be in the press box. I sat outside in bleachers near it. I believe Denne, there to cover the Cowboys, was outside, too.

I had to use a manual typewriter, which I hadn't done in a few years, to write my sidebar about the Steelers' veteran defensive line.

Wick took it to edit and commented later, "your writing's not as smooth writing on the old typewriter." Which was true.

In the pregame hype, Cowboys linebacker Thomas "Hollywood" Henderson got a lot of attention with his trash talk such as saying Steelers QB Terry Bradshaw was "so dumb he couldn't spell CAT if you spotted him the C and the A."

After Bradshaw passed for four touchdowns in a 35-31 Steelers victory, NFL writer Bruce Lowitt's lead was something like: "In the end, the only noise was not from Hollywood Henderson's mouth but from the turbulence of Terry Bradshaw's passes."

Perfect.

Print or online? – how do you receive your newspaper



Keith Myers - I read four newspapers online, but to get my newsprint fix I take the Funny Times. It was started by Susan Wolpert and Ray Lesser in 1985, inspired by the Santa Cruz Comic News. It is now published monthly, except for August and February, out of Cleveland Heights, Ohio. The tabloid is a collection of editorial cartoons, short stories, general interest cartoons, and includes features such as Weird News from editors at Andrews McMeel, Harper's Index, Curmudgeon compiled by Jon Winokur and the One Hundred Word Rant. I would recommend it to anyone. Subscription rates are \$28 for one year, \$48 for two years, or \$68 for three years.

I am including an example of cartoons in the latest edition.

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Linda Kramer Jennings - We subscribe to the print New York Times and Seattle Times and weekly Bainbridge Island Review. When we moved here from the DC area, I had to switch to digital for the Washington Post. I confess there are days when I first look at the news online because I'm too warm and cozy with my morning tea to go out and walk up the hill to our mailbox to get the papers. (My dog Daisy will wait somewhat patiently for that walk.) I think it's largely the layout that makes me enjoy print editions. The strategic thinking and planning that goes into how editors choose the mix of stories on every page of a print paper makes a difference in how and what we read.

In response to an earlier Connecting prompt, I too started as vacation relief. I worked summers at 50 Rock while in college before joining the San Francisco bureau.

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Bobbie Seril - Yes, I love a newspaper --- all paper, for that matter; my apologies to the trees. I peruse the daily New York Times, Wall Street Journal, New York Law Journal, and the weekly Crain's Business and Southampton (NY) Press, along with a few magazines, real estate and tax publications.

Free digital subscriptions are thrown in with all the print ones, but I generally turn to them only when away. (I do keep the papers coming, however, and often skim the local news and obituaries when I return.) In addition, I get the digital versions of the Washington Post and the Forward: the Post was a gift, and the Forward ceased print a few years ago.

I distinctly remember in Jimmy Fallon's early days hosting The Tonight Show, during one of his "Thank You Notes" sketches, he thanked newspaper delivery companies "for showing us where old people live."

However, I am happy to report that two of my three immediate neighbors (late 40s/early 50s) receive daily print newspapers. (The other one is younger, but had been under investigation by the Manhattan DA, so I'm thinking he may prefer not to leave physical evidence of his problems in the recycling room.)

I have been getting my papers through Mitchell's Delivery service since I moved back to NYC in 1978. Not only do they deliver papers and magazines, but also food. Today it's designer food and exotic beverages, but my sister used to get her plain old milk and juice from them in the 80s. Over the years, their staff of "Newsboys" has become "Delivery People," and includes young women, as evidenced by last year's holiday greeting.

Tom Brady won me over by the way he treated people

Cara Roberts Clarke - So on the occasion of Tom Brady's retirement, I thought I would share Norm and my Tom Brady story. It was about 17 years ago and one of those

evenings that only happens in Vegas. We were at N9NE Steakhouse having dinner with Matt Drudge of The Drudge Report. Pete Rose walked by our table. Norm and Pete went back many years to the Big Red Machine days that Norm covered for the AP. Norm hollered out to Pete to get his attention, but he just kept going. Matt said to Norm, "I thought you just had lunch with him." So Norm hollered out to him again. Pete turned around and gave Norm a "Pope wave" and forced smile. He then came over to our table. Norm stood up to greet him, and then suddenly - whack!!!! - Pete slapped Norm across his face. "You SOB! You made me the 5th worst tipper in your bleeping book - F you!" And then walks away.

(Backstory - Norm just released his book, "1001 Naked Truths" which was a Top 10 book on everything Vegas. He had given Pete a copy a few days earlier without remembering that Pete was in fact listed in the book in the Worst Tipping Category.)

About 30 seconds after Pete leaves, George Maloof, owner of the Palms at the time, comes over to say hello. With him is Tom Brady, who wanted to meet Matt Drudge.

Norm says to George, "Did you just see what happened?" George had not.

Norm exclaimed, "Pete Rose just bitch slapped me!"

Tom Brady leans down and looked at Norm with absolute disbelief: "Pete Rose just bitched slapped you???" It had definitely caught his attention. They joined us for a few minutes and fun conversation ensued.

Months later, Norm and I were at Tao Nightclub and noticed Tom Brady was on the dance floor with Bridget Moynahan. Brady looks over, sees Norm, and whispers something to Moynahan. Next thing we know, they walk over to where we were seated and he introduces her to us. Although he didn't mention it, clearly the Pete Rose bitch slapping incident had left a lasting impression on him.

He could not have been nicer. He even introduced himself to all of the other people around us. {"Hi, I'm Tom".) He won me over as a fan not just because of his football prowess, but also because of how he treated people.

I'm going to miss watching him play, but it has been a pleasure to be a fan. I am certain he will continue to be an inspiration as a leader.

Revisiting Hue Battle



Nick Ut - I visited Hue Imperial 1968 Tet Offensive where there are still many bullet holes from 50 years ago. Veteran Gary Counihan, a former U.S. Army helicopter pilot, is shown in the photo.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



David Powell

Stories of interest

Google now wants to answer your questions without links and with AI. Where does that leave publishers?

(Nieman Lab)

By JOSHUA BENTON

If you stick around long enough, even the most exotic future turns into the present.

At least that's what I thought when I remembered an old piece I wrote here at Nieman Lab all the way back in 2011 — one that seems newly relevant today.

It was about an on-stage interview that then-Google executive chairman Eric Schmidt gave to Walt Mossberg and Kara Swisher at what was then the annual All Things Digital conference. They cover a lot of then-hot topics, from Google losing to Facebook on “the friend thing” to whether it should buy Twitter. But there's one stretch that stood out, then and now, as having outsized importance to news companies.

Mossberg started out by ragging on the declining quality of Google's search results:

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

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A Mass. bill would provide tax credits for subscriptions to local news outlets (Media Nation)

BY DAN KENNEDY

Now that federal efforts to provide assistance to local news have fallen short, we may see more activity at the state level. One such effort is a bill filed in the Massachusetts Legislature that would provide tax credits to people who subscribe to a “local community newspaper,” whether in print or online. Boston Globe reporter Dana Gerber has the details (and quotes me).

The bill was filed last month by Rep. Jeffrey Rosario Turco, D-Revere. The legislation, H.D.1518, is similar to one of the three tax credits in the federal Local Journalism Sustainability Act — it provides a tax credit for subscribers of up to \$250 a year. As I told Gerber, this may prove to be symbolic given that state income taxes are lower than federal taxes. Still, it would focus attention on the importance of local news, which is not a bad thing.

The devil, as always, is in the details. According to the bill, an eligible newspaper or website would have to provide “original content derived from primary sources and relating to news and current events,” serve “the needs of a regional or local community,” and employ “at least 1 local news journalist who resides in such regional or local community.”

Read more [here](#). Shared by Michael Short.

Today in History - Feb. 8, 2023



Today is Wednesday, Feb. 8, the 39th day of 2023. There are 332 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 8, 1587, Mary, Queen of Scots was beheaded at Fotheringhay Castle in England after she was implicated in a plot to murder her cousin, Queen Elizabeth I.

On this date:

In 1693, a charter was granted for the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg in the Virginia Colony.

In 1910, the Boy Scouts of America was incorporated.

In 1922, President Warren G. Harding had a radio installed in the White House.

In 1924, the first execution by gas in the United States took place at the Nevada State Prison in Carson City as Gee Jon, a Chinese immigrant convicted of murder, was put to death.

In 1952, Queen Elizabeth II proclaimed her accession to the British throne following the death of her father, King George VI.

In 1960, work began on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, located on Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street in Los Angeles.

In 1965, Eastern Air Lines Flight 663, a DC-7, crashed shortly after takeoff from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport; all 84 people on board were killed. The Supremes' record "Stop! In the Name of Love!" was released by Motown.

In 1968, three Black students were killed in a confrontation between demonstrators and highway patrolmen at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg in the wake

of protests over a whites-only bowling alley.

In 1971, NASDAQ, the world's first electronic stock exchange, held its first trading day.

In 1973, Senate leaders named seven members of a select committee to investigate the Watergate scandal, including its chairman, Democrat Sam J. Ervin of North Carolina.

In 2007, model, actor and tabloid sensation Anna Nicole Smith died in Hollywood, Florida, at age 39 of an accidental drug overdose.

In 2020, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing said a 60-year-old U.S. citizen who'd been diagnosed with the coronavirus had died on Feb. 5 in Wuhan; it was apparently the first American fatality from the virus.

Ten years ago: A massive storm packing hurricane-force winds and blizzard conditions began sweeping through the Northeast, dumping nearly 2 feet of snow on New England and knocking out power to more than a half a million customers.

Five years ago: The federal government stumbled into a shutdown that would end by morning, its second in less than a month, as rogue Senate Republicans blocked a speedy vote on a massive, bipartisan, budget-busting spending deal. For the second time in a week, the Dow Jones industrials plunged by more than 1,000 points as a sell-off in the stock market deepened. Hundreds of thousands lined the streets of Philadelphia as the Eagles celebrated their Super Bowl victory with a parade.

One year ago: Retired Pope Benedict XVI asked forgiveness for any "grievous faults" in his handling of clergy sex abuse cases, but denied any personal or specific wrongdoing after an independent report criticized his actions in four cases while he was archbishop of Munich, Germany. "The Power of the Dog" topped the 2022 Oscar nominations with 10. (It would go on to win just one, best director for Jane Campion.)

Today's birthdays: Composer-conductor John Williams is 91. Broadcast journalist Ted Koppel is 83. Actor Nick Nolte is 82. Comedian Robert Klein is 81. Actor-rock musician Creed Bratton is 80. Singer Ron Tyson is 75. Actor Brooke Adams is 74. Actor Mary Steenburgen is 70. Author John Grisham is 68. Retired NBA All-Star and College Basketball Hall of Famer Marques Johnson is 67. Actor Henry Czerny is 64. Rock singer Vince Neil (Motley Crue) is 62. Former Environmental Protection Agency administrator Lisa P. Jackson is 61. Movie producer Toby Emmerich is 60. Actor Missy Yager is 55. Actor Mary McCormack is 54. Basketball Hall of Famer Alonzo Mourning is 53. Actor Susan Misner is 52. Dance musician Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo (Daft Punk) is 49. Actor Seth Green is 49. Actor Joshua Morrow is 49. Rock musician Phoenix (Linkin Park) is 46. Actor William Jackson Harper is 43. Actor Jim Parrack is 42. Folk singer-musician Joey Ryan (Milk Carton Kids) is 41. Actor-comedian Cecily Strong is 39. Rock musician Jeremy Davis is 38. Hip-hop artist Anderson.Paak is 37. Actor Ryan Pinkston is 35. NBA star Klay Thompson is 33. Professional surfer Bethany Hamilton is 33. Actor Karle Warren is 31.

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.

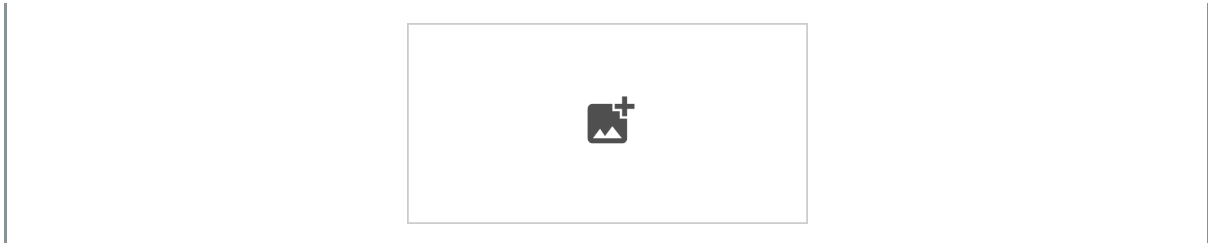


Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

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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