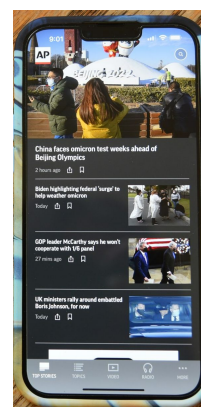


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Connecting

March 14, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this March 14, 2023,

Our colleague **John Wylie** described in last Friday's Connecting how he faced a situation with a gun to his head when a journalist for The Kansas City Star.

Our colleague **Mark Mittelstadt** responds in today's issue with a story from his pre-AP days when he was with an Iowa daily newspaper and wrote a story on the death of a high school student that upset the student's father so much that he paid an angry visit to the newsroom.

Got a story of your own to share? Please send it along.

On a lighter subject, also from Mark – Top this? Hard-billed caps.

“In our various roles for AP we figuratively wore many caps,” wrote Mittelstadt. “Literally, what did we wear? What do we still wear? As warmer weather approaches

and with baseball season just around the corner, we'll be digging caps out of the closet or pulling them out of storage to wear in order to protect disappearing hairlines from the sun or to show our pride in a team or effort. Thought about this as I was once again trying to make space in our coat closet for all of my caps. I don't know about others, but caps seem to multiply like rabbits in our house — from teams, organizations I support, AP, activities, souvenirs I've picked up along the way or have been given to me. It's a cull that has to take place from time to time to make room for new arrivals.

"I have probably 15 caps in the closet right now — some from Special Olympics, places we've visited, a San Pedro La Laguna cap from our Guatemalan grandson . But this probably is my favorite, certainly the one that gets pulled out most often for dog walks or working outside. It's from the now-closed Newseum in Washington, D.C. I received a couple hard hat tours when it was being built, APME had a pre-opening reception there, and Mary and I visited twice later. The display of AP photos and content — particularly from Sept. 11 — always impressed. We were sorry to see it close."



So... How many caps do you have?...Got a favorite, everyday cap? Why?...A special cap: signed, historical significance, personal relevance or cherished memory? Be sure to include a photo of you wearing a favored or special cap.

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

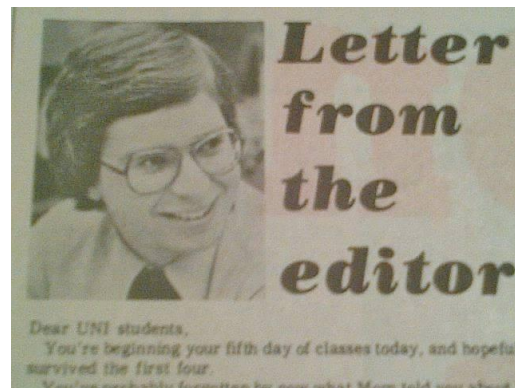
Paul

The distraught father



The Record news staff gathered for a group photo in 1979 in a corner of the newsroom. Editor Mark Mittelstadt (right) is at the desk where he had his encounter with an angry father two years earlier.

Mark Mittelstadt - The gun pointed at my head as a reporter came in the form of an angry, distraught father standing a foot in front of my desk.



"I just wanted to get a look at the person who wrote such an evil story about my son," he said.

I had been a year or so out of college in my first real job as "city editor" of The Record of Cedar Falls, Iowa. The title was more words than responsibility on an 8-person news staff putting out a 5,000-circulation AMer in the home of the University of Northern Iowa. In reality I was the municipal reporter covering the mayor's office, city council and other boards, and local law enforcement. Two of the primary responsibilities were the cop shop and fire department, where I got to personally know the chiefs as well as their lieutenants and many individuals within their units.

A story that lingers with me was following up the overnight death of a high school student in a fire in a makeshift living space over an old garage. The garage was one of those barn-shaped detached structures along the alley, very common with two-story box-on-box houses built in the 1930s and '40s. Someone had put flooring on the rafters; an old sofa and other furniture made a hang-out for teenagers.

The victim was a star wrestler for the local high school. He and his friends had been together but he had started feeling ill. Instead of taking him home, his friends helped

him upstairs in the friend's garage to lie down on the sofa. They went back out to knock around town, but not before lighting a candle near the sofa so he could see if he woke up. The candle started a fire, discovered when they returned to check on their buddy.

Hours later at the fire station, responding firefighters told me the victim had appeared to be quite intoxicated. They had talked to the teens who had called in the fire. They said they had trouble getting to him and not tripping on the beer cans and bottles littering the loft's floor. I used a couple of their quotes in my story, which appeared with a photo on the front page of the paper.

A day later the victim's father came downstairs to The Record's tiny basement newsroom and asked to see me. Coming around an editor's desk partition, he walked to my desk, one of three on a laminated shelf along the wall. I was in the basement corner, barely able normally to squeeze beyond a laminated shelf on an adjacent wall.

He stopped a foot from my typewriter wing, glaring. "I just wanted to get a look at the person who wrote such an evil story about my son," he said. He stood motionless for what seemed like an eternity, although was probably no more than 30 seconds. Like his son, he was fairly athletic and probably could have knocked me unconscious with a fist to my temple. At one point editor David Westphal stood and asked if he could help him. The father did not move.

He eventually left, and I had no further direct contact with him. A high school girl who worked part-time as our copy editor came in later and said students at the high school were upset by The Record story. "They said they weren't drinking," she said. Dave and I talked about it. Without official confirmation contradicting what I had been told by firefighters, we decided to leave the story alone.

On the Saturday after the story ran I got a call at home from the police chief. The father had left the house enraged and carrying a shotgun. The man's wife didn't know whether he was coming for me or whether possibly he was going to harm himself. "I'm sending a patrol car to sit in front of your house; he may already be there," the chief said.

He was.

At that point Mary and I felt it best to stay at home until we had more information and felt it was clear to go out.

Approximately four hours later the officer came to our door and said the man had been found uninjured, and had been returned home. The PD felt it was safe for him to leave.

From time to time I think back to that story. Could I have done something differently? Would it have been better to wait until official determination of the young man's blood alcohol level before using the firefighters' quotes? When the angry, distraught father came to the newsroom, should I (or we) have offered to meet with him in a side room to talk about his son and what he had been told about the fire?

Two weeks after the fire the county medical examiner's office released his official report saying the young man had died of smoke inhalation. His blood alcohol was minimal and probably not in the range of intoxication, seemingly contradicting the firefighters' comments. I asked the police chief about it later. He told me confidentially the report was adjusted down to spare the family, and the school, further pain and embarrassment.

Looking for your assistance

Did you cover Grenada?





Rennie Svirnovskiy - The Washington Post's audio team is hoping to get in touch with reporters and photographers who were deployed to Grenada in 1983. They would have been sent to cover the murder of Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop; the subsequent U.S. invasion and evacuation of American medical students living on the island; and the effort to recover the remains of Bishop and other slain members of his cabinet.

Attached are some photos taken by the AP's Peter Leabo in Grenada. We're especially hoping to get in touch with reporters who visited the location pictured. We're also wondering if anyone recognizes the two people in the right-hand corner of the top photo. One is balding and wearing a white shirt. The other is wearing a hat that says "U.S.S. New Jersey."

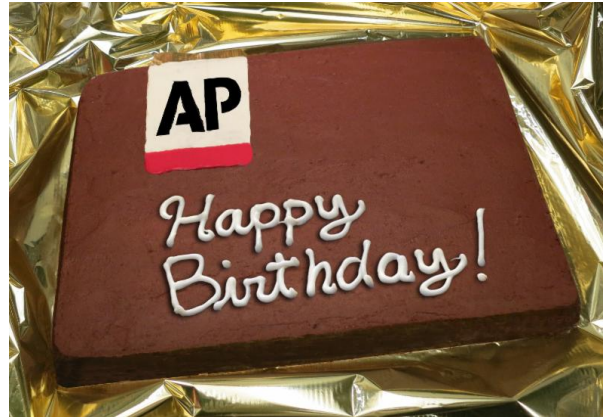
Anyone interested in talking should feel free to email Rennie Svirnovskiy at rennie.svirnovskiy@washpost.com. She can also be reached at 636-675-6043. Thank you so much!

Did you cover RFK assassination?

Jodi Daynard - I've been in touch with Linda Deutsch for some research I'm doing on a new novel, and she kindly suggested I join the daily newsletter that goes out to former AP folks.

My new novel is about an AP investigative reporter who goes out to LA in June of '68 to cover RFK's assassination. Photos of the NY and LA bureaus' stories covering the RFK assassination (I've read both Mears and Loh), and of course anyone still around who remembers that time period and event would be enormously helpful. I'm particularly interested in the daily life of AP journalists in NY and LA in the 1960s.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Larry Blasko](#)

[Steve Fox](#)

[Pat Milton](#)

[Sarah Postle](#)

Welcome to Connecting



[Shelley Adler](#)

[Jodi Daynard](#)

[D van Halsema](#)

Stories of interest

Is DeSantis darkening Florida's sunny open-records laws? (AP)

By DAVID A. LIEB

Florida has long been known for sunshine -- not only the warm rays that brighten its beaches but also the light of public scrutiny afforded by some of the nation's strongest meetings and records laws.

Although years of rollbacks have gradually clouded the impact, advocates are ringing alarms that this year presents the greatest threat to transparency yet in the state that coined the name "Sunshine Law" for its open-government rules.

Republican Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, weighing a presidential bid, is pursuing a home-state agenda that could make it harder for people to learn what public officials are doing or to speak out against them. In an unprecedented move for the Sunshine State, DeSantis has claimed an executive right to keep key government records secret. He's also seeking to weaken a nearly 60-year-old national legal precedent protecting journalists and others who publish critical comments about public figures.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Adolphe Bernotas.

-0-

Republican Matt Gaetz calls for Congress investigation into media watchdog Newsguard

(PressGazette)

By Bron Maher

US congressman Matt Gaetz has called for a House of Representatives subcommittee to investigate media watchdog Newsguard.

Gaetz, a Trump-aligned Republican, made the comments after a hearing about the so-called "Twitter Files", alleging that Newsguard drives ad revenue away from certain outlets and toward others deemed more favourable.

Newsguard assigns scores to news sites based on their credibility and transparency. It has previously made headlines for giving failing grades to outlets including the Daily Mail, Fox News, The Daily Beast and MSNBC – although all but MSNBC now score at least 60 out of 100 points. (Note: the author of this article previously worked as an analyst for Newsguard.)

Thursday's hearing before the House Judiciary Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government centred on allegations Twitter censored certain users at the suggestion of US government bodies.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Lindel Hutson.

-0-

Legal Notices Spiked: State Bills Would Remove Them From Print Newspapers (MediaPost)

By Ray Schultz, Columnist

Local newspapers nationwide are facing the loss of a key source of cash that many need to survive: legal notices.

Multiple states have laws in the hopper that would kill the traditional placement of government ads in print newspapers and place them online.

Case in point: the Tennessee legislature is mulling a bill, SB 1324, that would remove public foreclosure notices from newspapers to a state website that would charge a \$200 fee for uploads.

Maine is considering a bill to place the notices online. So are Iowa, and Connecticut, and Texas and Kentucky, and Idaho, and Arkansas.

Newspapers, their very survival at stake in some cases, are condemning such bills.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Lindel Hutson.

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Small-town citizens share support for the saving of their newspaper. (Editor and Publisher)

On February 8, 2023, the citizens of Pulaski, TN were shocked to hear that their 167-year-old newspaper was to be shut down. Then owner David Lake, along with publisher Scott Stewart announced in a statement that: "Declining advertising and subscription revenues combined with increasing costs, finally reached a point where maintaining the Pulaski (Tennessee) Citizen as a business has not been possible, and that county will have no newspaper or news platform dedicated solely to covering local news, sports, events, government and people."

Pulaski is a city in the county seat of Giles County, located on the central-southern border of Tennessee, where Wikipedia shows a 2020 population recorded as 8,397. The city lies halfway between Nashville, TN and Huntsville, AL, on the I-65 corridor.

The paper's publisher Scott Stewart, who was born in Pulaski and began as a reporter at the paper in 1995 stated in the closing announcement: "As devastating as this is for those of us who cherish what local news is and means to our community, so many people will never realize what they've lost until it's gone. That may be the saddest part of the whole thing. Personally, I offer my apologies to everyone who does care that the PULASKI CITIZEN is going away. It went down on my watch, and I accept responsibility for my part in its demise."

Read more [here](#).

CNN wins its first-ever Oscar

From Tom Jones' Poynter Report:

CNN won an Academy Award Sunday night. The news network won its first-ever Oscar for best documentary for "Navalny," a film about the plot to kill Russian dissident and former presidential candidate Alexei Navalny.

Navalny's wife, Yulia, went on stage with the film's director to accept the Oscar. She said, "My husband is in prison just for telling the truth. My husband is in prison just for defending democracy. Alexei, I am dreaming about the day you will be free, and our country will be free. Stay strong, my love."

Director Daniel Roher dedicated the award to Navalny and "all political prisoners around the world."

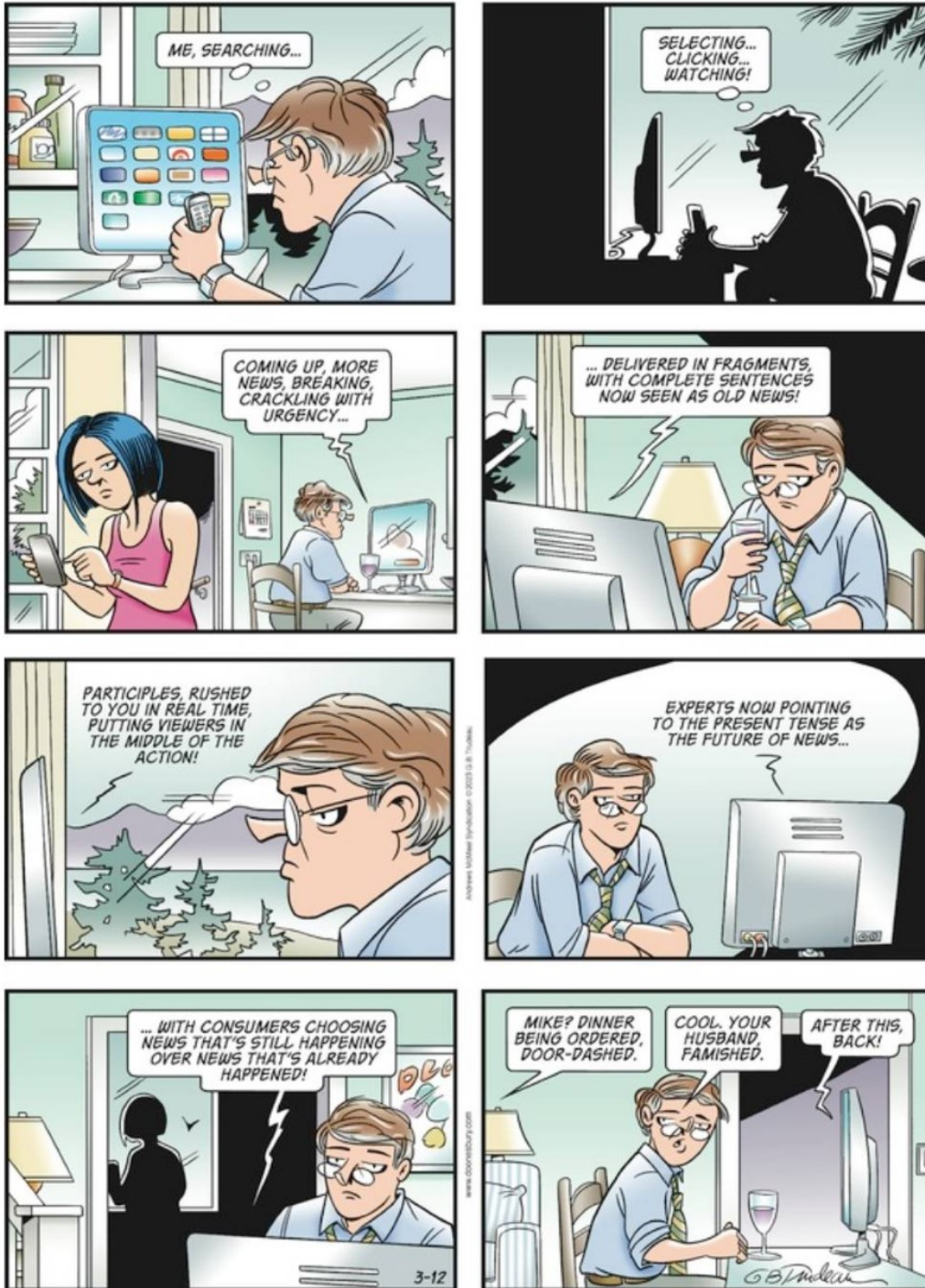
In 2020, Navalny was poisoned with Novichok — an attack that many, including Navalny, believe was the doing of the Kremlin as payback for his criticisms. Russia has denied any involvement. Navalny is now serving a nine-year sentence at a maximum-security prison near Moscow. He was accused of probation violation and embezzlement charges that most believe were trumped up and politically motivated.

As far as the now Oscar-winning film, CNN writes, "'Navalny' documents a methodical investigation by CNN Chief International Correspondent, Clarissa Ward, and journalist group, Bellingcat, to unmask Navalny's would-be killers."

As I mentioned, this is CNN's first Oscar win after previously being nominated five times.

The Final Word

Doonesbury by Garry Trudeau



Shared by Len Iwanski

Today in History - March 14, 2023



Today is Tuesday, March 14, the 73rd day of 2023. There are 292 days left in the year.

Today's highlight in history:

On March 14, 1794, Eli Whitney received a patent for his cotton gin, an invention that revolutionized America's cotton industry.

On this date:

In 1879, physicist Albert Einstein was born in Ulm, Germany.

In 1939, the republic of Czechoslovakia was dissolved, opening the way for Nazi occupation of Czech areas and the separation of Slovakia.

In 1951, during the Korean War, United Nations forces recaptured Seoul.

In 1962, Democrat Edward M. Kennedy officially launched in Boston his successful candidacy for the U.S. Senate seat from Massachusetts once held by his brother, President John F. Kennedy. (Edward Kennedy served in the Senate for nearly 47 years.)

In 1964, a jury in Dallas found Jack Ruby guilty of murdering Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, and sentenced him to death. (Both the conviction and death sentence were overturned, but Ruby died before he could be retried.)

In 1967, the body of President John F. Kennedy was moved from a temporary grave to a permanent memorial site at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

In 1980, a LOT Polish Airlines jet crashed while attempting to land in Warsaw, killing all 87 people aboard, including 22 members of a U.S. amateur boxing team.

In 1990, the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies held a secret ballot that elected Mikhail S. Gorbachev to a new, powerful presidency.

In 1995, American astronaut Norman Thagard became the first American to enter space aboard a Russian rocket as he and two cosmonauts blasted off aboard a Soyuz spacecraft, headed for the Mir space station.

In 2011, Neil Diamond, Alice Cooper, Tom Waits, Darlene Love, Dr. John and Leon Russell were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

In 2015, Robert Durst, a wealthy eccentric linked to two killings and his wife's disappearance, was arrested by the FBI in New Orleans on a murder warrant a day before HBO aired the final episode of a serial documentary about his life. (Durst would be convicted in the shooting death of his friend, Susan Berman; he died in January 2022 while serving a life sentence in California.)

Ten years ago: During his first full day as pontiff, Pope Francis stopped by his Vatican hotel to pick up his luggage and pay the bill himself. Some 10,000 workers from across the European Union protested outside a summit of EU leaders in Brussels, demanding they end years of austerity and focus instead on curbing runaway unemployment with more spending. A nearly 19-hour standoff in Herkimer, New York, came to an end inside a cluttered, abandoned bar as police SWAT teams killed the suspect in four fatal shootings. The NHL's realignment plan was approved by the league's board of governors.

Five years ago: Tens of thousands of students across the country walked out of their classrooms to demand action on gun violence and school safety; the action came a month after the shooting that killed 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Stephen Hawking, the best-known theoretical physicist of his time, died at his home in Cambridge, England, at the age of 76; he had stunned doctors by living with the normally fatal illness ALS for more than 50 years. President Donald Trump chose Larry Kudlow, a longtime fixture on the CNBC business news network, to be his top economic aide.

One year ago: Russia and Ukraine opened a new round of talks even as Moscow's forces pounded away at Kyiv and other cities across the country in a punishing bombardment the Red Cross says has created "nothing short of a nightmare" for civilians. Leon Scharzbaum, a survivor of the Nazis' death camp at Auschwitz and a lifelong fighter for justice for the victims of the Holocaust, died at 101. Country music legend Dolly Parton announced she was pulling out of the nominations for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, saying she hadn't "earned that right." (She would later reverse course and accept induction into the hall.)

Today's Birthdays: Former astronaut Frank Borman is 95. Actor Michael Caine is 90. Composer-conductor Quincy Jones is 90. Actor Raymond J. Barry is 84. Country singer Michael Martin Murphey is 78. Rock musician Walt Parazaider (payr-ah-ZAY'-dur) (formerly with Chicago) is 78. Actor Steve Kanaly is 77. Comedian Billy Crystal is 75. Actor-writer-comedian-radio personality Rick Dees is 72. Country singer Jann Browne is 69. Actor Adrian Zmed is 69. Prince Albert II, the ruler of Monaco, is 65. Actor Laila Robins is 64. Actor Tamara Tunie (tuh-MAH'-ruh TOO'-nee) is 64. Producer-director-writer Kevin Williamson is 58. Actor Elise Neal is 57. Actor Gary Anthony Williams is 57. Actor Megan Follows is 55. Rock musician Michael Bland is 54. Country singer Kristian Bush is 53. Actor Betsy Brandt is 50. Actor Grace Park is 49. Actor Daniel Gillies is 47. Actor Corey Stoll is 47. Actor Jake Fogelnest is 44. Actor Chris Klein is 44. Actor Ryan Cartwright (TV: "Kevin Can Wait") is 42. Actor Kate Maberly is 41. Singer-musician Taylor Hanson (Hanson) is 40. Rep. Dan Crenshaw, R-Texas, is 39. Actor Jamie Bell is 37. Rock musician Este Haim (HY'-uhm) (Haim) is 37. NBA star Stephen Curry is

35. Actor Ansel Elgort is 29. Olympic gold medal gymnast Simone Biles is 26. Actor James Freedson-Jackson (Film: "The Strange Ones") is 21.

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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