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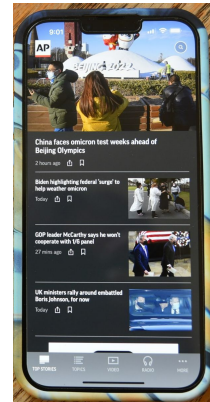
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Connecting

April 6, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this April 6, 2023,

HAPPY PASSOVER to our Jewish colleagues. Passover began at sundown Wednesday and ends on Thursday, April 13, in the United States.

We lead today's Connecting with memories of those who worked with our colleague **Don Deibler** during his 43-year career in the AP's Treasury department – where he was tied closely to AP bureau chiefs across the country.

Our colleague **Chris Connell** brings you the story behind a book by **Jack Bodkin**, historical fiction Jack wrote and self-published about his ancestors' escape from Ireland on a coffin ship in the Great Famine and the lives they made in America.

Chris' story relates that Jack is the son of the late, longtime AP photo editor **John Bodkin**, who as a Navy public information officer in World War II was the first to glimpse the wet negatives of AP photographer Joe Rosenthal's photo capturing six Marines' raising the flag over Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima in February 1945 and

famously told his darkroom crewmates, "Men, we can stop making pictures right now. Here is the one for all time."

John Bodkin was AP World Services photo editor and retired from AP in 1975.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Remembering Don Deibler





Dan Day - Don was one of the most upbeat and helpful people in the AP. He helped me through many, many issues over the years, often at the end of the New York workday when I was calling in from the West Coast. When I worked at 50 Rock, it was a treat to be able to stop by Assessments and chat with him.

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Charles Hill - I was saddened to learn about Don's death.

He was the perfect New York headquarters partner for bureau chiefs, truly a teammate you could count on to get what you needed when you needed it, even if you needed it right away. Always.

Don was unfailingly competent and professional and friendly. You could almost hear his smile coming through the phone. Perhaps he had a bad day and sounded that way some time, but if so, I never experienced it. Whether the problem was a simple one he could solve right away or a more difficult one he had to work through, I knew that in the end what I was getting was an answer I could depend on. And I did.

It was a pleasure working with someone who not only did excellent work, but was a good person and made the person on other end of the phone feel better than when the call was placed.

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Sue Johnson - I am saddened by the death of Don Deibler. He was a friendly and helpful voice on the phone and I was delighted to meet him in person during a visit to 50 Rock some years ago. I learned he was friends with my then-husband's uncle, Johnny Wilson, who worked at Barney's, so I felt we were friends two different ways.

We shared messages on Facebook Messenger from time to time after we both retired. He was a good man, and I will treasure his memory.

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Keith Robinson - In my time as an ACOB and bureau chief, memories of my contact with Don Deibler are of an AP headquarters guy who was always reachable by phone or email when I needed help with member rates. And when he gave me a rate – always by email for the record but in a timely manner – I knew it was rock-solid. To me, he was the official source on member rates above anyone else.

I always addressed him in my email messages as “Mr. Deiber” because that’s how the bureau chief I trained under, Jake Booher, said I should address him.

And he was always cheerful. He always sounded happy. Whether he was or not, I do not know. But he never ever came across as bothered by my requests to quote a member for the rate of a service or when I had questions about my AP vehicle.

I always wondered how anyone could be so friendly, especially when I never met him throughout the many years of our email exchanges and phone calls.

I can recall of no one at headquarters who was more responsive to the staff in the field as was Mr. Deibler.

Anyone experimenting with AI?

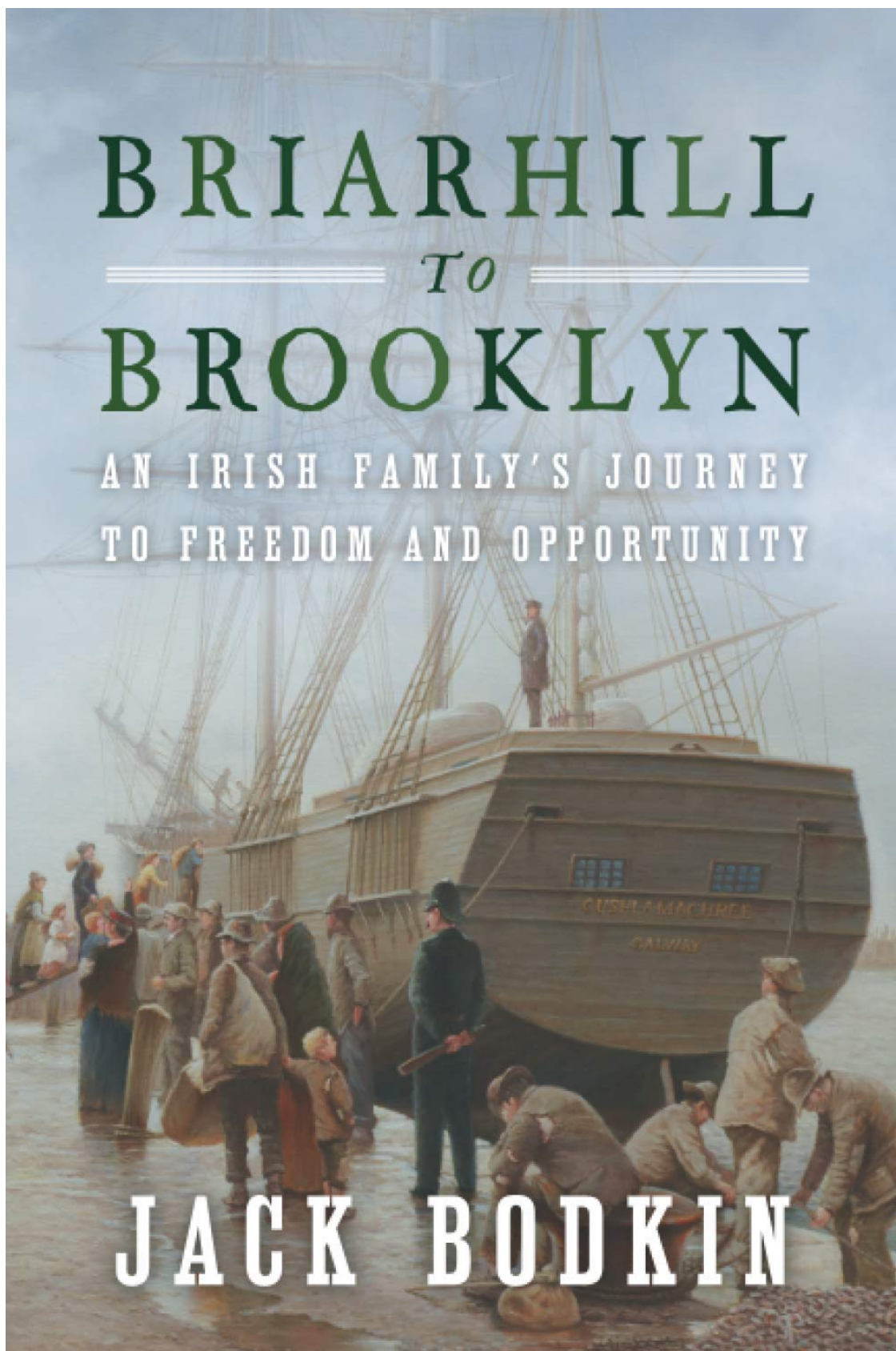
John Brewer - Noting the two recent items in Connecting (March 10 and March 24) about ChatGPT, is there anyone in the Connecting audience who is experimenting with this new artificial intelligence tool?

Lots of ads on the web offering ChatGPT classes (see a few of them below) -- and alleging that ChatGPT and its spinoffs can write blog posts, articles, college essays and advertisements in a blink of an eye.

Anyone taking a ChatGPT class . . . or checking on whether a robot can indeed outwrite them?

(And isn't Mother AP trying AI to automate some routine sports stories? When I have a few extra moments, I certainly plan to take ChatGPT out for a spin.)

The saga of the Bodkin family is the stuff of fiction



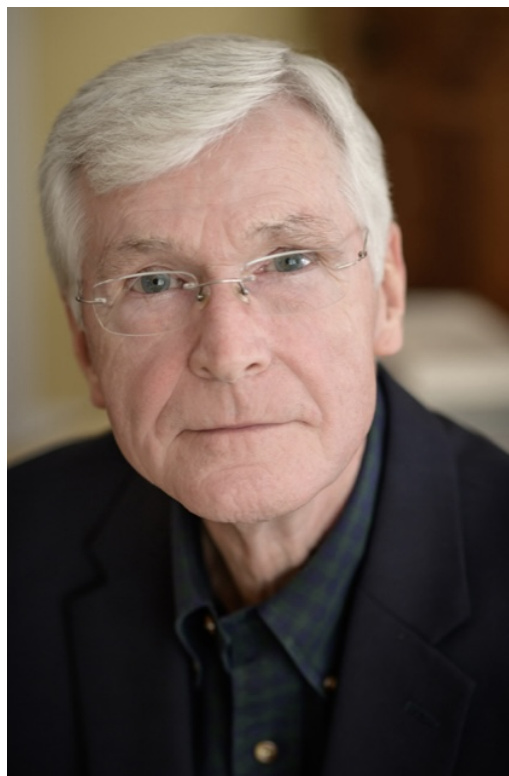
By [Christopher Connell](#)

Jack Bodkin is living a retirement fantasy, a certified public accountant with no writing background who now has sold 22,000 copies of the historical fiction he wrote and

self-published about his ancestors' escape from Ireland on a coffin ship in the Great Famine and the lives they made in America.

The book, "Briarhill to Brooklyn: An Irish Family's Journey to Freedom and Opportunity," is still finding new readers, thanks largely due to ads he places on Facebook and word of mouth from customers, many with Irish roots of their own.

Bodkin, 75, is the son of the late, longtime AP photo editor John Bodkin, who as a Navy public information officer in World War II was the first to glimpse the wet negatives of AP photographer Joe Rosenthal's photo capturing six Marines' raising the flag over Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima in February 1945 and famously told his darkroom crewmates, "Men, we can stop making pictures right now. Here is the one for all time."



Jack Bodkin was born in Brooklyn and raised on Long Island from where his father made the long commute for decades by rail and subway to 50 Rockefeller Plaza. The elder Bodkin told his children stories about the war and also what he knew about the Bodkins who fled Galway in 1848 at the height of the potato blight. That wasn't much beyond reports of a bishop who stayed and a great-great uncle who as a teenager made that voyage in steerage on the Cushlamachree, became a housepainter in Brooklyn, enlisted in the Union Army as a medic and became a distinguished, beloved physician.

"Bodkin isn't the most Irish-sounding name and most of my friends probably assumed we were not," the son said. "I really knew very, very little about Ireland."

That changed after Bodkin retired as managing partner of an accounting firm in Wheeling, W.Va., where he'd attended to a Jesuit college. "My kids set me up with an Ancestry.com membership and I started putting together a family tree from scratch," he said. "I was lucky a few times. I found the ship's manifest that my family came over on and I found the 1902 eulogy for my great-great uncle Dominic."

He also found a death notice for Dominic's parents, from typhus, just weeks after the family who had set out on a cart from Castlegar landed safely in New York.

A year after starting his quest on Ancestry.com, Bodkin shared the family tree with kin and almost everybody "had the same reaction: They were bored to tears. It was just a flowchart. It had the names and dates of birth, but it didn't have any stories about them."

He convinced his son, a busy emergency room physician, and brother to join him on a five-day trip to Ireland – his first – where the flag honoring the Bodkins as one the "14

Tribes of Galway” flies above Eyre Square, a park in the heart of Galway. Diocesan prelates shared what little information they had on the life of his great-great-great grandmother’s brother, Bishop Laurence O’Donnell, and at St. Columba’s Church in Castlegar they found the hand-written baptism records of the Bodkin children in the 1830s. But there was little else to go on. “Record-keeping in Ireland was not very good for a number of reasons—secrecy caused by the British persecution being foremost,” Bodkin said.

He refused to give up. With encouragement from daughter Kate and wife Christine, Bodkin decided to fill in the blanks of the lives of the clan in Galway, Brooklyn and beyond. He’d just make the stories up.

He never tried his hand at writing short stories or fiction or writing anything else beyond the richly detailed footnotes on the audited financial statements he prepared. “Those footnotes told the story of the balance sheet,” he said. “This might sound like a stretch, but I really think that that encouraged me to tell my family’s story.”

It took nearly four years to complete “Briarhill to Brooklyn,” a 423-page novel replete with dialogue and detailed life stories that he says is 95 percent fiction and 5 percent fact. He paid an amateur editor \$25 an hour to do a first edit (“she gave me good ideas”), tested it with six “beta readers” and later hired two professional editors and a designer. The illustration on the haunting, gray cover shows dozens of impoverished Irish peasants watched by British soldiers as they queued up to board the Cushlamachree.

And then he used self-publishing tools found on Amazon that print copies as each order comes in from readers’ responding to his ads on Facebook. They are drawn by the authentic dialogue and life stories he has conjured from the barest of Census entries and other records.

Bodkin now is contemplating writing a prequel to Briarhill about the grim years in the 1840s when 1 million Irish died of starvation and 1 million more left for other shores. “That will be totally a novel because I don’t have any facts about the family then,” he said.

He isn’t satisfied with reaching 22,000 readers. The next part of this real-life retirement fantasy is find a major publishing house that could sell ten times that many books. And after that? “I think – and other people have told me – a movie would be great.”

To get a copy, just go to Amazon.com and search for “Briarhill to Brooklyn.”

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Frank Aukofer](#)

[Kia Breaux](#)

Stories of interest

Journalist's arrest threatens reporting from Russia (AP)



Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich is escorted by officers from the Lefortovskiy court to a bus, in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, March 30, 2023. Russia's top security agency says an American reporter for the Wall Street Journal has been arrested on espionage charges. The Federal Security Service said Thursday that Evan Gershkovich was detained in the Ural Mountains city of Yekaterinburg while allegedly trying to obtain classified information. (AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — The arrest of a Wall Street Journal reporter on espionage charges in Russia has news organizations based outside the country weighing for the second time in a year whether the risks of reporting there during wartime are too great.

The Journal and other news outlets continued to press Friday for the release of Evan Gershkovich, He was taken into custody by Russian security officials a day earlier and accused of spying, charges the newspaper vehemently denies.

More than 30 press freedom groups and news organizations, including the Journal, The New York Times, BBC, The Associated Press, The New Yorker, Time and The Washington Post, signed a letter Friday to Anatoly I. Antonov, Russia's ambassador to the U.S., expressing concern about "a significant escalation in your government's anti-press actions.

"Russia is sending the message that journalism within your borders is criminalized and that foreign correspondents seeking to report from Russia do not enjoy the benefits of the rule of law," they said.

Read more [here](#).

Click [here](#) for Wall Street Journal story: Blinken Says 'No Doubt' Russia Has Wrongfully Detained WSJ's Evan Gershkovich

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NPR protests as Twitter calls it 'state-affiliated media'

(AP)

By **DAVID BAUDER**

NEW YORK (AP) — Twitter has labeled National Public Radio as "state-affiliated media" on the social media site, a move some worried Wednesday could undermine public confidence in the news organization.

NPR said it was disturbed to see the description added to all of the tweets that it sends out, with John Lansing, its president and CEO, calling it "unacceptable for Twitter to label us this way."

It was unclear why Twitter made the move. Twitter's owner, Elon Musk, quoted a definition of state-affiliated media in the company's guidelines as "outlets where the state exercises control over editorial content through financial resources, direct or indirect political pressures, and/or control over production and distribution."

"Seems accurate," Musk tweeted in a reply to NPR.

NPR does receive U.S. government funding through grants from federal agencies and departments, along with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The company said it accounts for less than 1% of NPR's annual operating budget. But until Wednesday, the same Twitter guidelines said that "state-financed media organizations with editorial

independence, like the BBC in the UK or NPR in the United States, are not defined as state-affiliated media for the purposes of this policy.”

Read more [here](#).

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Trump has always thrived on attention and the media is playing a game he helped invent (AP)

By TED ANTHONY

In the currency of today’s attention economy, Donald Trump is the world’s richest man.

His media-engulfed arraignment in New York was an out-of-court Exhibit A. In returning to the no-business-like-show-business metropolis that propelled him to tabloid-fodder fame so many years ago, the former president also returned to the very stage where he thrives the most. As he did so, even in an atypically sedate manner, he demonstrated the peculiar way he encounters the world — as luminary and aggrieved party rolled into one.

Love him? Hate him? Don’t care? Doesn’t matter. Just like during his presidency, he commands notice. Still. Thousands of New York City police officers, the U.S. Secret Service and swarms of journalists deployed across lower Manhattan can all attest to that.

It was a procedural court appearance, the low rung of drama in a criminal case, but it was a full-on spectacle. And calling it that, assessing it in that way, does not diminish it — not in today’s world, where spectacle and all its byproducts drive the attention economy and the cultural conversation.

There was something about Tuesday, and about the five days that preceded it, that was somehow both familiar and deeply abnormal.

Read more [here](#).

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‘In the eye of the Stormy’: how papers across the world reacted to Trump’s charges (Guardian)

By JONATHAN YERUSHALMY

Donald Trump’s historic appearance before a New York court on Tuesday has dominated global media, with the former president’s not guilty plea receiving wall-to-wall coverage across TV, newspapers and online.

The Guardian says, “Trump pleads not guilty to 34 charges in hush-money case”, with the paper highlighting the judge’s order that the former president refrain from rhetoric that could cause civil unrest.

Time magazine gained a reputation for producing iconic covers throughout the Trump presidency, and they hit the mark again on Wednesday, with the simple headline: “Unprecedented”.

Read more [here](#).

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Don Lemon’s Misogyny at CNN, Exposed: Malicious Texts, Mocking Female Co-Workers and ‘Diva-Like Behavior’ (Variety)

By Tatiana Siegel

Back in 2008, Don Lemon was co-anchoring CNN’s “Live From” weekday show with Kyra Phillips, a gig that he landed after he arrived at the network two years prior from local news in Chicago. For months, tensions between the pair kept mounting. On more than one occasion, a “Live From” producer and a newsroom supervisor had to pull Lemon off the air during a commercial break because of the anchor’s provocative antics, not unlike his recent declaration that the 51-year-old Nikki Haley isn’t a viable presidential candidate because she “isn’t in her prime.” Amid the charged atmosphere, sources say Lemon disrespected colleague Nancy Grace on the air and Soledad O’Brien during an editorial meeting attended by roughly 30 staffers.

But his antipathy toward Phillips was particularly concerning and had many members of the close-knit Atlanta news team on edge. While Phillips was on assignment in Iraq — a high-profile gig that Lemon coveted — he vented his disappointment at being passed over by tearing up pictures and notes on top of and inside Phillips’ desk in the news pod they shared, according to two sources who worked there at the time. When she returned from Iraq, things only got weirder. One night while dining with members of the news team, she received the first of two threatening text messages from an unknown number on her flip phone that warned, “Now you’ve crossed the line, and you’re going to pay for it.” Phillips was visibly rattled and quickly enlisted CNN’s higher ups to identify the sender.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac, Mark Mittelstadt.

The Final Word



Shared by Mark Mittelstadt.

Today in History - April 6, 2023



Today is Thursday, April 6, the 96th day of 2023. There are 269 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 6, 1896, the first modern Olympic games formally opened in Athens, Greece.

On this date:

In 1862, the Civil War Battle of Shiloh began in Tennessee as Confederate forces launched a surprise attack against Union troops, who beat back the Confederates the next day.

In 1864, Louisiana opened a convention in New Orleans to draft a new state constitution, one that called for the abolition of slavery.

In 1909, American explorers Robert E. Peary and Matthew A. Henson and four Inuits became the first men to reach the North Pole.

In 1917, the United States entered World War I as the House joined the Senate in approving a declaration of war against Germany that was then signed by President Woodrow Wilson.

In 1943, "Le Petit Prince" (The Little Prince) by Antoine de Saint-Exupery was first published by Reynal & Hitchcock of New York.

In 1945, during World War II, the Japanese warship Yamato and nine other vessels sailed on a suicide mission to attack the U.S. fleet off Okinawa; the fleet was intercepted the next day.

In 1954, Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., responding to CBS newsman Edward R. Murrow's broadside against him on "See It Now," said in remarks filmed for the program that Murrow had, in the past, "engaged in propaganda for Communist causes."

In 1968, 41 people were killed by two consecutive natural gas explosions at a sporting goods store in downtown Richmond, Indiana.

In 1974, Swedish pop group ABBA won the Eurovision Song Contest held in Brighton, England, with a performance of the song "Waterloo."

In 2008, Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, speaking at a private fundraiser in San Francisco, spoke of voters in Pennsylvania's Rust Belt communities who "cling to guns or religion" because of bitterness about their economic lot; Democratic rival Hillary Rodham Clinton seized on the comment, calling it "elitist."

In 2014, legendary Hollywood actor Mickey Rooney, 93, died in North Hollywood.

In 2017, comedian Don Rickles, known for his biting insults, died in Beverly Hills, California at age 90.

In 2020, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was transferred to the intensive care unit of a London hospital where he was being treated for COVID-19, after his condition deteriorated.

Ten years ago: Iran and six world powers failed to reach agreement during talks in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on how to reduce fears that Tehran might use its nuclear technology to make weapons. Militants killed six Americans, including diplomat Anne Smedinghoff, 25, and an Afghan doctor in a pair of attacks in Afghanistan, the deadliest day for the United States in the war in eight months.

Five years ago: Texas Republican congressman Blake Farenthold abruptly resigned, four months after announcing he wouldn't seek re-election amid sexual harassment allegations. Former Democratic Sen. Daniel Akaka of Hawaii died in Honolulu at the age of 93. Federal law enforcement authorities seized online classified site Backpage.com and its affiliated websites known for listing adult escort services. A South Korean court sentenced former President Park Geun-hye to 24 years in prison on charges including bribery and extortion stemming from a corruption scandal that removed her from office a year earlier. A transport truck collided with a bus carrying a junior hockey team in western Canada, killing 16.

One year ago: The mayor of the besieged Ukrainian port city of Mariupol said more than 5,000 civilians had been killed during the invasion by Russian troops. In response, the U.S. and its Western allies moved to impose new sanctions against the Kremlin over what they brand war crimes. European health officials investigated a rapidly evolving outbreak of salmonella in 134 children that appears linked to chocolate Easter eggs.

Today's Birthdays: Nobel Prize-winning scientist James D. Watson is 95. Actor Billy Dee Williams is 86. Actor Roy Thinnes is 85. Movie director Barry Levinson is 81. Actor John Ratzenberger is 76. Actor Patrika Darbo is 75. Baseball Hall of Famer Bert Blyleven is 72. Actor Marilu Henner is 71. Olympic bronze medal figure skater Janet Lynn is 70. Actor Michael Rooker is 68. Former U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., is 67. Rock musician Warren Haynes is 63. Rock singer-musician Black Francis (The Pixies) is 58. Actor Ari Meyers is 54. Actor Paul Rudd is 54. Actor-producer Jason Hervey is 51. Actor Zach Braff is 48. Actor Joel Garland is 48. Actor Candace Cameron Bure (buhr-RAY') is 47. Actor Teddy Sears is 46. Jazz and R&B musician Robert Glasper

is 45. Actor Eliza Coupe is 42. Singer and guitarist Kenneth Pattengale (Milk Carton Kids) is 41. Actor Bret Harrison is 41. Actor Charlie McDermott is 33.

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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