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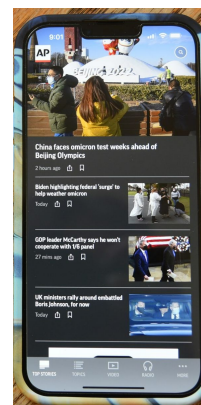
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Connecting

April 25, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this April 25, 2023,

The shooting of Ralph Yarl, a 16-year-old Black youth, by an 84-year-old white man after Yarl rang a doorbell at the wrong house resonated far beyond the Kansas City, Mo., neighborhood where it occurred April 13. It became a nationwide story.

And it was far more than a news story for our colleague **Kia Breaux**, a 26-year Associated Press veteran, for whom it struck nightmarishly close to home: she's the mother of two Black teenage boys, one of whom attends the same high school as Yarl, and the house where she has raised her sons John and Jaden is in a neighborhood adjacent to the one where the shooting occurred.

Breaux, an AP regional director, wrote an essay that moved on the AP wire Monday and we bring it to you as our lead story in today's Connecting. Photos that accompanied the story were taken by Kansas City AP photographer **Charlie Riedel**.

I've known Kia since she joined the Kansas City bureau in 1997 and have been a friend and a mentor as she moved up the AP ladder to the job I once held, Kansas City chief of bureau, before she was named a regional director in 2016.

A remarkable woman and journalist, she's an even better mom who balances the demands of her work with raising two sports-mad boys with great aplomb. Her older son John just earned an academic and baseball scholarship to the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

It's a thoughtful, and yes, heart-breaking, essay and I hope you learn from it, as have I. Kia's email is – kbreaux@ap.org



Here's to a great day ahead – be safe, stay healthy and live it to the fullest.

Paul

For this Black mom, Ralph Yarl could have been her son



Kia Breaux, background, watches her sons John, 17, right, and Jaden, 14, play a game in front of their home in Kansas City, Mo., Friday, April 21, 2023. The recent shooting

of Black teenager Ralph Yarl by an 84-year-old white man when Yarl mistakenly went to the wrong address in a nearby neighborhood, has shaken many Black residents in the predominantly white region of the city. (AP Photo/Charlie Riedel)

By [KIA BREAU](#)X

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — On April 13, the nightmare that I'd worried about ever since we moved into our neighborhood came true.

That was the day that I learned 16-year-old Ralph Yarl was shot after mistakenly ringing a doorbell at the wrong house while trying to pick up his younger brothers from a playdate. And even as I anguished over what happened to him, one thing kept echoing in my mind: It could have been my child.

John, my older son, is 17 and attends the same high school as Ralph. It's common for me to ask John to pick up his 14-year-old brother Jaden from various extracurricular activities. I've been cautious about what I ask John to do and where I ask him to go. I don't know what might happen if he crosses paths with someone who feels threatened by the color of his skin.

That's because the suburbs of Kansas City north of the Missouri River have long held a reputation of not being the most welcoming to Black families. While I've adjusted to the awkward stares and subtle racism, I've always had a nagging fear that something bad could happen if my sons ventured too far from home without me.

I became painfully aware that John shared that fear shortly after Ahmaud Arbery was gunned down by white men while jogging through a Georgia neighborhood in 2020. Like Arbery, John liked to jog through the neighborhood. Now, however, he was asking me to trail him in my car as he jogged through ours.

I felt like I'd failed as a mother. I had done everything I could to make him feel safe and protected, but he was afraid to run past the familiar, well-manicured lawns in the only neighborhood he's ever known as home.

I knew there would be challenges when we moved in as one of the only Black families in the subdivision in 2005. But I figured the benefits would outweigh the drawbacks. Besides, you can't run or hide from racism.

My ex-husband and I bought our home when John was just six weeks old — three years before Staley High School opened — because we wanted our children to receive a quality education. Our realtor touted plans for the state-of-the-art high school campus as a selling point. We loved the layout of the home on a half acre of land, and the sprawling backyard was perfect for the Irish setter we had at the time.

Some neighbors welcomed us with housewarming gifts of flowers and baked goods. Later, we were told that one family sold their house shortly after we moved in because they didn't want to live near Black people. At a party at a neighbor's house not long after that, a guest wondered out loud why Black people would want to live in

a predominantly white neighborhood. “Wouldn’t they feel more comfortable living around their own people?”

Then there was the time I sent my then-husband to return a casserole dish a neighbor left at my house after a party. The former neighbor, whom we’d known for years at that point, opened the door and yelled, “We don’t want any. Go Away,” and slammed the door. She didn’t take the time to make out the face on the other side of the door. She just saw Black. She apologized profusely when she realized what she had done.

It touched John from very early on, too. He was in kindergarten when I had to confront some of the realities of raising a Black child in this predominantly white suburb. Silly me. I thought I’d have more time to prepare.

We were home one evening when I overheard John yell at the TV during a game of Wii boxing. “Take that, you jigaboo!” He could tell by my face that the word was more than a casual insult aimed at his virtual opponent. It took a while for me to coax out of him that a white kid at school had called him that name.

How do you explain to a 5-year-old why someone would call him that? I fumbled through it just as I’ve learned to fumble through raising my Black sons in an environment where their skin is considered by some to be a weapon.



Kia Breaux, left, with her sons John, 17, center, and Jaden, 14, walk the family dog, Lucky, in their Kansas City, Mo., neighborhood, Friday, April 21, 2023. (AP Photo/Charlie Riedel)

These things happen. You block them out and you move on, but the subtle tension remains. No one wants to talk about it. Eventually you become numb. You avoid certain situations. It’s like walking on eggshells to avoid a landmine.

It becomes exhausting to try to shield my sons from the ugliness I know exists. John is dating now. If he plans to ask a white girl out, I always ask: "Do her parents know you are Black? Are they OK with it?"

When I heard what happened to Ralph, I cried. I haven't slept well since, because it could have easily been John who was shot in the head after mistakenly going to NE 115th Street instead of NE 115th Terrace to pick up his brother.

Ralph's mistake was an innocent one. In my neighborhood, address mix-ups happen all the time. Many houses are numbered identically, and sometimes the only difference in a street address is "terrace" versus "street" or "northwest" versus "northeast."

We recently had a string of unexpected visits. Just after dawn one morning, we were awakened to men we didn't hire inspecting tree damage in our backyard after a storm. A few days later, workers for a lawn-care company let themselves into our backyard to treat it for grubs.

The most troubling incident came when a man we didn't know rang our doorbell in the middle of the day.

My husband and I, both working from home, couldn't answer right away. By the time we got to the door, the man was in our backyard and fumbling around our back door. When my husband confronted him, he told us he was a contractor sent to measure our door for a replacement. We hadn't ordered a door.

So it's easy for me to see how mistakes happen. But it never occurred to me to grab my firearm and shoot these unexpected visitors. That simply isn't the first option in the world that I'm working so hard to create for my family.

Since Ralph's shooting, I've had a lot of friends check on us. My best friend, who lives in St. Louis, pointed out that Ralph looks a lot like Jaden, my younger son. I'd noticed the resemblance, too. I cried again.



Kia Breaux, right, plays ball with her sons Jaden, 14, left, and John, 17, in front of their home in Kansas City, Mo., Friday, April 21, 2023. (AP Photo/Charlie Riedel)

I don't regret moving here. My sons have outstanding teachers and coaches. They've excelled academically and developed valuable friendships with a diverse group of young people. I've met some of my closest friends in this neighborhood.

Yet as a Black woman in America, I rise each day knowing that I will invariably face small indignities tossed my way by white people who mistakenly believe they're entitled to dismiss me because of my race.

I haven't been called the "N-word," nor have I been physically accosted. Racism in this part of the city is far more subtle, and if you're not acutely aware of what to look for, it blows right past you.

I won't say I'm used to misguided attempts to marginalize my presence, because I won't accept being treated like I'm less than anyone else. But when it happens, I'm rarely surprised.

And I'll also admit: It's tiring for my family to have to go out of its way to make white people feel comfortable with our Blackness. We can't peel off our skin; not that we would if we could. Everyone wants to proclaim, "I don't see color," when, in fact, that's the first thing that they see when they see my sons. It's hard to miss the only Black kid on the baseball diamond.

But on the playing field, at least, my boys generally get the benefit of the doubt that Ralph Yarl wasn't given on that fateful night earlier this month.

Longtime Associated Press journalist Kia Breaux is currently Midwest regional sales director for the AP, based in Kansas City.

Click [here](#) for link to this story.

Denny Vohar did an invisible but essential job

Brad Kalbfeld - Dave Lubeski got it just right in his tribute to Denny Vohar in yesterday's Connecting. In fact, connecting is a good description of what Denny did every day. He was part of the small, often unsung, team that kept our mics hot and our actualities playing in live broadcasts for hundreds of U.S. radio stations and American Forces Radio.

It's sometimes difficult to remember in this age of ubiquitous smartphones that up until the 2010s, a radio reporter couldn't get the job done without tape recorders and specialized equipment to plug into the amplifiers at news events, and professional microphones to capture the natural sound of a protest march or baseball game. Denny, as a member of the broadcast engineering team, was one of the people who made sure we had the gear that we needed and that it would connect to the newsmaker's equipment -- and to the lines necessary to feed the audio back to the Broadcast News Center.

He often went to the scene of major events such as the Olympics, political conventions, and space shots weeks ahead of time to make sure everything was properly wired and in good working order. Many times, he started with an empty room, and by the time the anchors and reporters arrived, it was a complete studio.

This was tedious and sometimes physically challenging work -- you wouldn't believe some of the spaces he had to squeeze into -- because we had to operate within the footprint provided by the event organizers. And then we'd have to make last-minute changes, because these spaces never look the same as you imagine them from a blueprint, and when you have to sit in the same space for hours on end (in the freezing cold during an inauguration and in the steamy heat during a nominating convention), equipment and laptops and phones and video monitors all have to be close at hand and in the right place. But, as Dave said, Denny didn't complain, he didn't show any frustration. He simply gave his signature shrug and got the job done.

It wasn't glamorous, it wasn't visible to anyone but those of us who worked with him, but it got us on the air and kept us there, which made it essential.

Natacha Pisarenko named Southern Cone news director

By Nicole Meir

In a memo to staff on Monday, News Director for Latin America and the Caribbean Eduardo Castillo announced that Natacha Pisarenko will oversee all news coverage in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Here is his memo to staff (español abajo):

The appointment of Natacha, one of AP's finest photographers, is part of a larger commitment to our coverage in Southern Cone.

Natacha, who has been acting news director since 2020, will be the first woman to lead AP's Southern Cone region. In a 20-plus year career at AP, Natacha has covered the Olympics, several World Cups and the Dakar Rally. She has produced incredible photo packages looking at victims of sexual violence, as well as the uncontrolled use of chemicals in Argentina and how the agroindustry had grown reliant on genetically modified crops. She has covered natural disasters, political conflicts in Latin America, and has been part of our photo coverage of the war in Ukraine.



As a manager, Natacha has shown that she is a team player with an ability to see the value of a story in all formats. Natacha studied photography at the Avellaneda School of Photographic Arts and at the Argentine Association of Graphic Reporters. She started her career as photojournalist in 1997 at the Argentine newspaper La Nacion. She joined AP in 2002 in Buenos Aires.

Natacha will report to the News Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Eduardo Castillo. She starts immediately, and she will stay in Buenos Aires.

Click [here](#) for link to this story.

Sharing memories



Hank Ackerman - Monte Hayes and I donned our AP hats to talk about our times in Caracas, Venezuela and Lima, Peru with spouses Sandra and Mell in Naples on Sunday, April 23, 2023. We worked together in Caracas 1978-1980. Monte was bureau chief in Lima 1985-2008. I was bureau chief in Lima 1975-1978. In photo, from left: Hank, Sandra, Monte, Mell.

Stories of interest

Fox News ousts Tucker Carlson, its most popular host

(AP)



FILE - Tucker Carlson, host of "Tucker Carlson Tonight," poses for photos in a Fox News Channel studio on March 2, 2017, in New York. (AP Photo/Richard Drew, File)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — Fox News on Monday ousted prime-time host Tucker Carlson, whose stew of grievances and political theories about Russia and the Jan. 6 insurrection had grown to define the network in recent years and make him an influential force in GOP politics.

Fox said that the network and Carlson had “agreed to part ways,” but offered no explanation for the stunning move, saying that the last broadcast of “Tucker Carlson Tonight” aired last Friday. Carlson ended the show by saying, “We’ll be back on Monday.”

Yet on Monday night, viewers tuned in to morning anchor Brian Kilmeade, who said that Carlson was gone, “as you may have heard.”

“I wish Tucker the best,” Kilmeade said. “I’m great friends with Tucker and always will be.”

Then, he switched to a story on Hunter Biden, the president’s son.

The break from Carlson comes amid a cascade of bad legal news for the network. A week ago, Fox agreed to pay more than \$787 million to settle a lawsuit with Dominion Voting Systems over the network’s airing of false claims following the 2020 presidential election — shortly before Carlson was expected to be called to testify.

CBS’ “60 Minutes” on Sunday aired a report about a man caught up in a Jan. 6 conspiracy theory who said Carlson was “obsessed” with him, and whose lawyer has put Fox on notice of potential litigation. Carlson was also recently named in a lawsuit by a former Fox producer who said the show had a cruel and misogynistic workplace, and that she had been pressured to give misleading testimony in the Dominion case.

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

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Defamation suit produced trove of Tucker Carlson messages (AP)

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The \$787.5 million settlement between Fox News and Dominion Voting Systems spared executives and on-air talent from taking the stand in a defamation lawsuit that centered on Fox airing false claims of a stolen election in the weeks after former President Donald Trump's 2020 loss.

The lawsuit still revealed plenty of what Fox personalities had been saying about the bogus election claims, including Tucker Carlson, the network's top-rated host who was let go Monday. His unexplained departure has turned a spotlight on what he said in depositions, emails and text messages among the thousands of pages Dominion released in the leadup to jury selection in the case.

Carlson's messages lambasted the news division and management, revealed how he felt about Donald Trump and demonstrated his skepticism of the election lies — so much so that Fox attorneys and company founder Rupert Murdoch held him up as part of their defense of the company. The judge who oversaw the case ruled that it was "CRYSTAL clear" none of the election claims related to Dominion was true.

"Sidney Powell is lying," Carlson told a Fox News producer in a Nov. 16, 2020, exchange before using expletives to describe Powell, an attorney representing Trump.

Read more [here](#).

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Don Lemon fired from CNN after divisive morning show run (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — CNN fired longtime host Don Lemon on Monday following his short and disastrous run as a morning show host, a little over two months after he apologized for on-air comments about Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley being past her prime.

The move quickly turned nasty. While CNN chairman and CEO Chris Licht announced, after Lemon had co-hosted the show Monday, that they had "parted ways," Lemon characterized it as a firing and said it was surprise to him.

"After 17 years at CNN I would have thought someone in management would have the decency to tell me directly," Lemon said. CNN said that Lemon was given the opportunity to meet with management but released a statement on Twitter instead.

CNN offered no public explanation for Lemon's dismissal. During a February discussion on "CNN This Morning" with co-hosts Poppy Harlow and Kaitlan Collins about the ages of politicians, he said that the 51-year-old Haley was not "in her prime." A woman, he said, was considered in her prime "in her 20s, 30s and maybe her 40s."

Read more [here](#).

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Philanthropy and local journalism, as seen through the eyes of the giving community (Editor and Publisher)

Episode 184 of "E&P Reports" - A Vodcast series hosted by Mike Blinder

According to a recent report from the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy, total giving from all sources in the U.S. rose from \$124.31 billion in 1993 to just over \$360 billion last year (2022). However, the report cites that the total giving figure has continued to track closely with the size of the U.S. economy, where the overall "giving" figure remained at roughly 2% of the national GDP over those 20 years.

What the report does show as a major shift is a change from total giving coming from individuals versus foundations, the giving coming from foundations rising significantly, from less than 7% in 1992 to nearly 19% of all giving today.

As more and more news publishers seek innovative sustainable new revenue models to offset the cost of their newsrooms, more and more money is becoming available to support local journalism through philanthropic entities. In this episode of E&P Reports, we explore "The Chronicle of Philanthropy" (CoP), a monthly magazine that covers the nonprofit world and is read by charity leaders, foundation executives, fundraisers, and others involved in philanthropy. The publication was founded in 1988 by Phil Semas and Stacy Palmer, who today is the editor. In May of 2022, CoP announced plans to spin off and become an independent, nonprofit organization that achieved its 501(c)(3) status in February of 2023 upon approval by the IRS.

Read more [here](#).

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Rupert Murdoch's news empire knowingly lied. Can we just pause to take in how extraordinary that is? (Guardian)

Margaret Simons

There are always plenty of grounds for cynicism about the state of the news media, but in the last week we seem to have arrived at a new set of low expectations.

Fox News, having settled its defamation case with Dominion in the US and with Lachlan Murdoch withdrawing proceedings against Crikey in Australia, the Murdoch news empire has effectively admitted what was already clear: that it knowingly broadcast untrue information.

Make no mistake, this is new. It is directly contrary to the purposes of journalism, and indeed News Corp Australia's own code of conduct, which states "Publications should take reasonable steps to ensure reports are accurate and not misleading."

We have sadly grown used to news reporting that lacks context, that mixes opinion and fact and by doing so distorts, and that makes egregious and careless errors. These faults are not unique to News Corp and Fox News. If only.

But for a mainstream, professional news organisation to lie, and effectively admit to having done so – that is new, and we should stop and think about the implications.

Nor was this a trivial lie. It was politically charged, and dangerous – concerning allegations the US election had been rigged.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Richard Chady.

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Famous Twitter users disavow Musk over verification return (AP)

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Celebrities, professional athletes and other high-profile Twitter users are once again being verified by the social media platform and they don't know why their blue check marks reappeared — nor do they seem too happy about it.

Twitter removed the blue marks last week from accounts that don't pay a monthly fee. But the check marks mysteriously returned for many highly followed accounts over the weekend, leading some prominent users to disavow what's become a divisive symbol of Twitter owner Elon Musk's erratic changes to the platform.

The account belonging to the Auschwitz Memorial, which has 1.5 million followers and regularly tweets out photos and names of Holocaust victims, tweeted on Sunday that after two days of no blue check mark, its account was reverified. The Memorial said it was "obliged to clarify" that it never subscribed and paid for Twitter Blue as the icon implies.

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - April 25, 2023



Today is Tuesday, April 25, the 115th day of 2023. There are 250 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On April 25, 1945, during World War II, U.S. and Soviet forces linked up on the Elbe (EL'-beh) River, a meeting that dramatized the collapse of Nazi Germany's defenses.

On this date:

In 404 B.C., the Peloponnesian War ended as Athens surrendered to Sparta.

In 1507, a world map produced by German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller contained the first recorded use of the term "America," in honor of Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci (veh-SPOO'-chee).

In 1859, ground was broken for the Suez Canal.

In 1862, during the Civil War, a Union fleet commanded by Flag Officer David G. Farragut captured the city of New Orleans.

In 1898, the United States Congress declared war on Spain; the 10-week conflict resulted in an American victory.

In 1901, New York Gov. Benjamin Barker Odell, Jr. signed an automobile registration bill which imposed a 15 mph speed limit on highways.

In 1915, during World War I, Allied soldiers invaded the Gallipoli (guh-LIH'-puh-lee) Peninsula in an unsuccessful attempt to take the Ottoman Empire out of the war.

In 1945, delegates from some 50 countries gathered in San Francisco to organize the United Nations.

In 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope was deployed in orbit from the space shuttle Discovery. (It was later discovered that the telescope's primary mirror was flawed,

requiring the installation of corrective components to achieve optimal focus.)

In 1992, Islamic forces in Afghanistan took control of most of the capital of Kabul following the collapse of the Communist government.

In 2002, Lisa “Left Eye” Lopes of the Grammy-winning trio TLC died in an SUV crash in Honduras; she was 30.

In 2019, former Vice President Joe Biden entered the Democratic presidential race, declaring the fight against Donald Trump to be a “battle for the soul of this nation.”

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama consoled a rural Texas community rocked by a deadly fertilizer plant explosion that killed 15 people, telling mourners during a memorial service at Baylor University they were not alone in their grief. Obama also joined his four living predecessors to dedicate the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas. Reggaeton star Don Omar was the top winner of the Billboard Latin Music Awards in Coral Gables, Florida, taking home 10 prizes.

Five years ago: Ford Motor Co. said it would get rid of most of its North American car lineup as part of a broad plan to save money and make the company more competitive; the Mustang sports car and a compact Focus crossover vehicle would be the only cars sold in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Danish engineer Peter Madsen was convicted of murder for luring a Swedish journalist onto his homemade submarine before torturing and killing her; Madsen was later sentenced to life in prison.

One year ago: Russia unleashed a string of attacks against rail and fuel installations deep inside Ukraine, far from the front lines of Moscow’s new eastern offensive, in a bid to thwart Ukrainian efforts to marshal supplies for the fight. The U.S. moved to rush more weaponry to Ukraine and said the assistance from the Western allies was making a difference in the 2-month-old war. Elon Musk reached an agreement to buy Twitter for roughly \$44 billion, promising a more lenient touch to policing content on the social media platform where he — then the world’s richest person — had made a habit of promoting his interests and attacking his critics to his tens of millions of followers.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor Al Pacino is 83. Rock musician Stu Cook (Creedence Clearwater Revival) is 78. Singer Bjorn Ulvaeus (ABBA) is 78. Actor Talia Shire is 78. Actor Jeffrey DeMunn is 76. Rock musician Steve Ferrone (Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers) is 73. Country singer-songwriter Rob Crosby is 69. Actor Hank Azaria is 59. Rock singer Andy Bell (Erasure) is 59. Rock musician Eric Avery (Jane’s Addiction) is 58. Country musician Rory Feek (Joey + Rory) is 58. TV personality Jane Clayson is 56. Actor Renee Zellweger is 54. Actor Gina Torres is 54. Actor Jason Lee is 53. Actor Jason Wiles is 53. Actor Emily Bergl is 48. Actor Marguerite Moreau is 46. Actor Melonie Diaz is 39. Actor Sara Paxton is 35. Actor/producer Allisyn Snyder is 27. Actor Jayden Rey is 14.

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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