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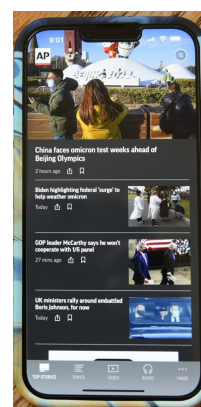
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Connecting

Aug. 3, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this Aug. 3, 2023,

After the announcement Tuesday by **Valerie Komor**, director of Corporate Archives, on plans for archivist **Francesca Pitaro** to retire next month, I invited Francesca to say a few words to her Connecting colleagues. And here is what she had to say:

Francesca Pitaro - When I walked into Valerie's office 15 years ago to interview for a temporary position, I had no idea that it marked my entry into the AP family. It's been a pleasure personally and professionally to work with so many good people, and to have the opportunity to contribute to AP's mission. Valerie has been an exceptional supervisor, mentor and friend, and the corporate archives collections are an archivist's dream. AP's history includes the history of our world for 175 years, and every day we worked to preserve that record and to make it accessible to news staff, scholars, and students. It was never boring. I can't think of a better place to have spent the last 15 years of my work life.

Though I'm leaving my job, I know I'll keep my connection to the AP, with a little help from Connecting and Paul Stevens. After September 22, you can reach me at pitarof@gmail.com

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And sharing this note to Francesca from colleague [Mark Mittelstadt](#) – I join Paul Stevens in congratulating you for your service to The Associated Press and for your invaluable contributions to Connecting. You and Valerie have played critical roles in keeping retirees engaged with their former employer and in enhancing our remembrances of working for the mother ship. AP journalism continues, and only gets richer, with each shared story.



We lead today's issue with news that [John Flesher](#), longtime Traverse City correspondent, is retiring at the end of this month after a 42-year career. We congratulate him on his service to the AP. If you have a favorite story of working with John, please send it along.

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

Paul

John Flesher to retire after 42-year AP career, 31 as Traverse City correspondent

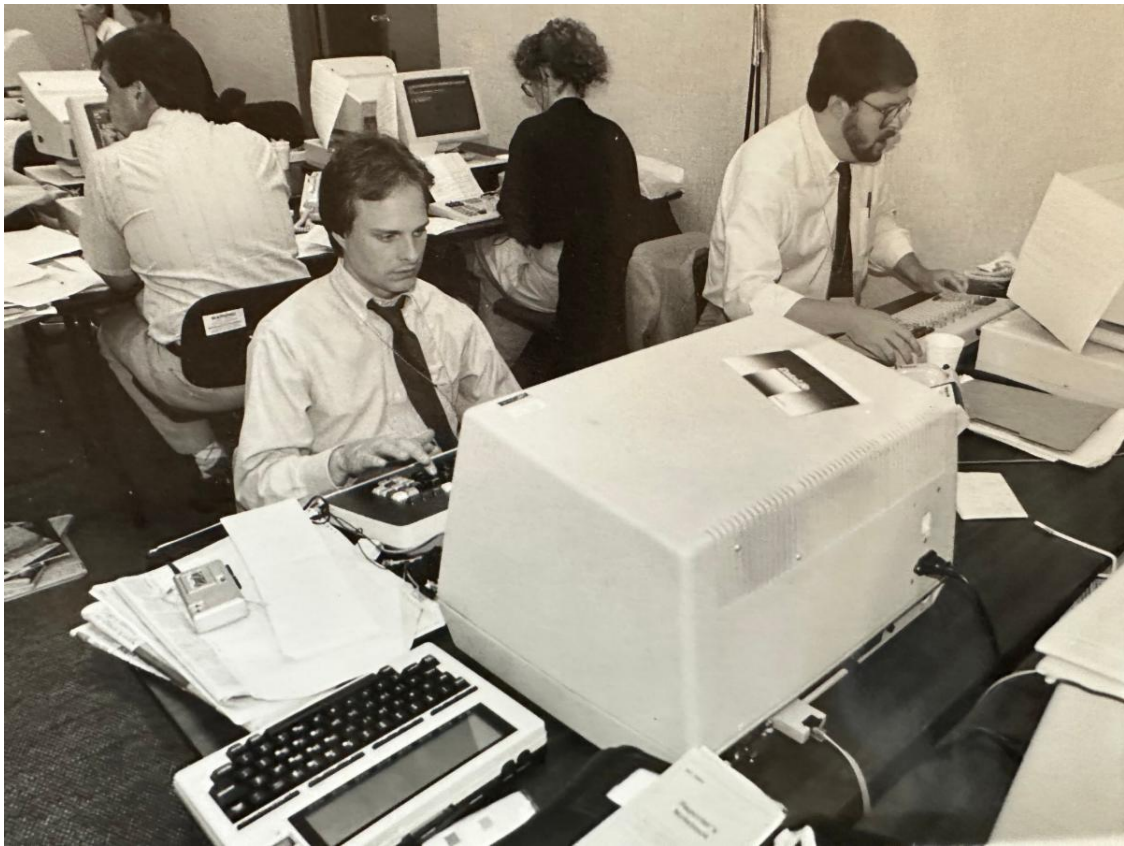
[Roger Schneider](#), Assistant News Director-Great Lakes - Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin, in a note Tuesday to staff:

It's the end of an era, folks, and I don't have enough superlatives in my vocabulary to do John Flesher's career justice.

It's difficult to imagine AP without John, who will end his 42-year career with the company at the end of this month. Anyone who has worked with John knows about his dedication, knowledge, camaraderie and professionalism. We also know him in most recent years largely for his coverage of environmental issues and the Great Lakes, but his career has been about so much more.

John started in AP's Raleigh bureau in 1981, after a year with his hometown paper, the Goldsboro (N.C.) News-Argus. He spent the next eight years, handling spot news – crime, trials, hurricanes, the tobacco industry, even some college football and basketball – but his primary focus was government and politics as chief statehouse reporter for five years, covering the governor, legislature, appellate courts and

election campaigns, including the Democratic and Republican national conventions in 1988.



In the press room at the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, 1988.



Petting Lucy the Plott hound after a 1989 legislative hearing on whether to designate the breed as North Carolina's official state dog. They did.

In July 1989, he transferred to Washington as the Michigan regional reporter – a time when a number of larger states or groups of states had D.C. reporters. He covered regulatory issues involving the auto industry and Michigan's congressional delegation.

It was during this time that he was captivated by the Great Lakes and did the first of many stories about federal issues affecting them.

But Washington wasn't his calling, so John and Sharon headed to Traverse City where he became a solo correspondent in 1992. He expected to be there just a short time, but the location and the job grew on him. He ended up staying 30-plus years.

He was AP's northern Michigan reporter, responsible for a huge chunk of territory: the entire Upper Peninsula and the northern part of the Lower Peninsula. He wandered the woody northlands doing features on all kinds of topics: capturing a photo of the endangered Kirtland's warbler; two monks who established a monastery on the Lake Superior shoreline; quirky little businesses, including one that manufactured caskets for pets; towns that are virtually empty during bitter, snowy winters; the rise of tribal casinos; the demise of the U.P.'s last copper mine; the region's famed but struggling cherry industry; an organization trying to clone and preserve the world's oldest trees.



Interviewing Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm after a Mackinac Bridge walk, in the late 2000s.

He also reported extensively on the burgeoning paramilitary "militia" movement in the 1990s, which had a large presence in Michigan. He had AP's first in-depth story on it, months before the Oklahoma City bombing thrust it into the national spotlight. In recent years he helped cover the militia-related Whitmer kidnapping plot.

John is best known for the beat he's had from beginning to end of his Michigan tenure -- the Great Lakes -- covering environmental and scientific stories aspects as well as economic, cultural and historical angles -- shipwrecks, for example. In the 1990s, he

spent a couple of weeks on Lake Superior with two rival groups of shipwreck explorers who took dives aboard submersible craft to the gravesite of the Edmund Fitzgerald, some 530 feet down. He talked his way onto one of them and filed a story after gazing upon the wreckage in the dark, cold silence and snapping pictures through a small porthole for nearly an hour.

John was named to AP's Environmental Beat Team when it was established in 2009, which enabled him to cover these topics more broadly. He spent six weeks in Louisiana and Mississippi in 2010 helping cover the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. He journeyed to Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico for an investigative project on wastewater spills from oil pipelines and wells; Idaho and Ohio for a project on toxic algae blooms; North Dakota and Missouri for spot and enterprise stories on flooding and the nation's crumbling levees; Iowa and Minnesota for an investigative piece on factory farms; and Northern California for a multiplatform package on tribal forest burning. He spent days along the Mississippi and Illinois rivers for one of many enterprisers on invasive carp; a story that yielded probably his most-used photo ever – a close-up of a silver carp in midair with others springing from the water in the background.



Posing with AP's Gillian Flaccus (left) and David Goldman (right) in Northern California, reporting on indigenous tribes' forest burning culture in 2021.

In Michigan, John spent nearly a week on snowbound Isle Royale National Park for a takeout on the relationship between its wolves and moose, a topic he would return to often.

Others included the Flint water crisis spending countless hours going through thousands of government documents and emails, the Line 5 oil pipeline controversy,

PFAS chemical pollution, and debates over protections for endangered species such as the gray wolf, monarch butterfly and northern long-eared bat.

John's official last day will be Wednesday, Aug. 30. We will have the appropriate sendoffs.

In the meantime, please join me in congratulating John on his amazing journalism journey and wishing him all the best in his retirement.

Confessions of a tech writer

Mike Doan - "You may be a writer, but you don't know jack about technology," said the owner of the satellite TV magazine where I was editor. Maybe he was right—I never even learned to operate a satellite dish.

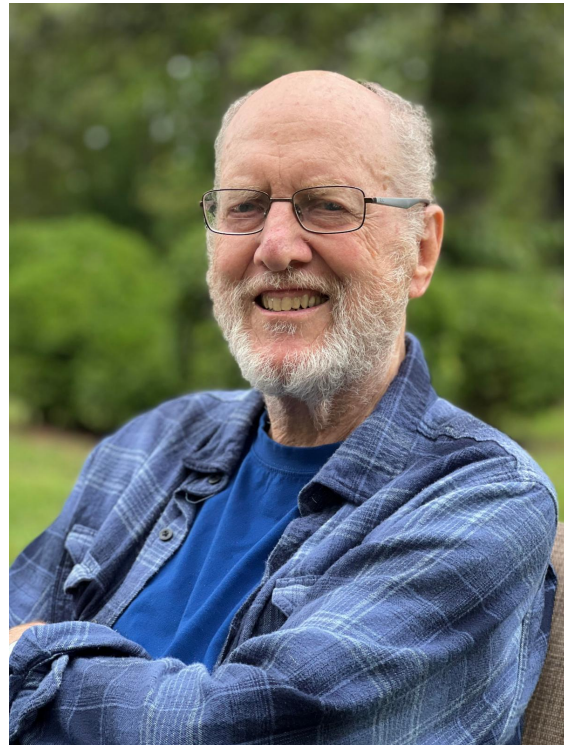
Moving on, well after AP. I found a job at the Kiplinger Letter, where I was considered a technical guru. If I worked for a satellite magazine, I must be, right?

So I wrote about the latest in computers, mobile phones and social media from 1992 until I retired in 2009, a heady time in the tech industry. I didn't necessarily understand how these things worked, but I interviewed people who did. If some expert called me to complain "you got that all wrong," I would listen carefully and ask the person to be a contact. They were my best sources!

I went to tech conferences and heard the likes of Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates and Steve Jobs describe their latest breakthroughs. We were all amused at one meeting when Gates' power point display went dark and his staff couldn't fix it. No one is immune! At one convention, I saw young women at a Japanese company's booth taking pictures with their cell phones. What? Who would want to do that? But I wrote about it anyway.

My proudest moment came after I wrote a two-page special section on the future of the Internet in 1995 (ancient days in that field.) Years later, it was a featured article posted in the company's first-floor museum in an exhibit called: "From Gutenberg to the Internet."

I didn't get everything right. I was confronted in the late 1990s by the Y2K issue: the prospect of computers failing when the new century began, with machines misinterpreting "00" as the year 1900. A doomsayer bought our mailing list and put



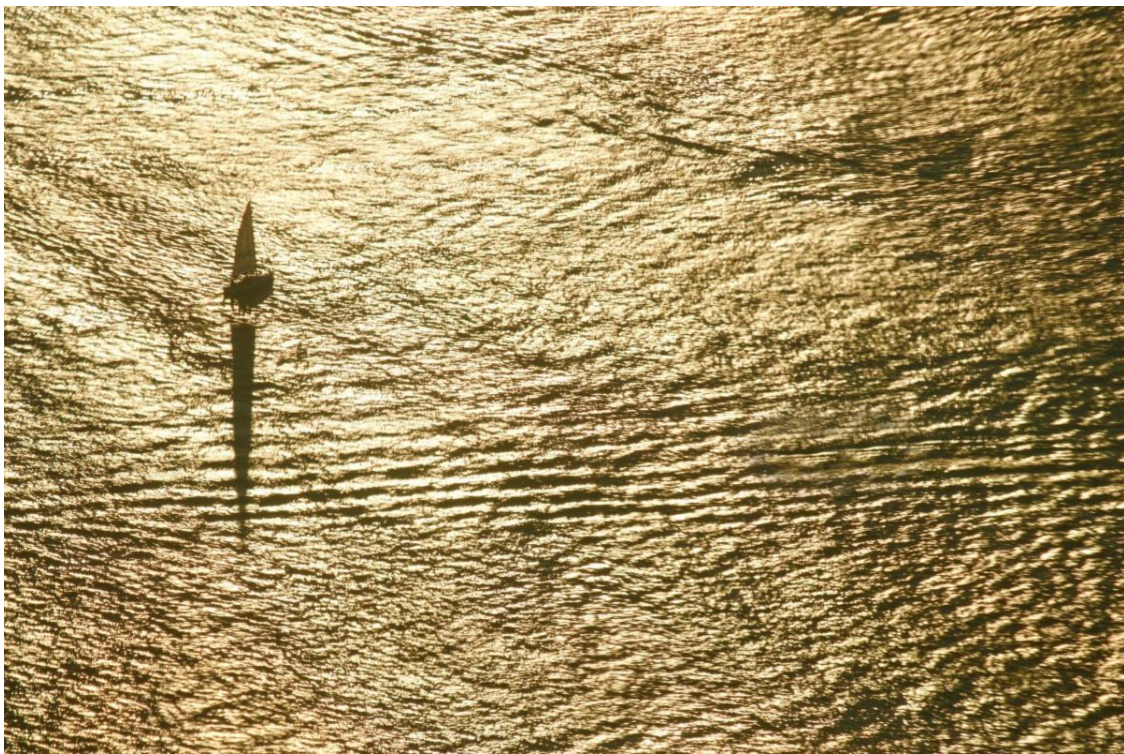
out his own newsletter forecasting disaster on Jan. 1. I got dozens of calls from panicky readers. One man asked me to talk his father out of selling his house and moving to a cabin in the mountains.

I must admit that I absorbed some of this fear and may have written some worrisome stories about it. Fortunately, my editor toned them down. When the century began, there was no calamity even in countries like Italy, which had taken no precautions. I was roasted about this mercilessly at a retirement event. I deserved it.

Going to The Edge

Malcolm Ritter - As an early birthday present, (my wife) Jane took me to The Edge, billed as the highest open-air viewing platform in the Western Hemisphere. We went in late afternoon and watched the golden light of sunset gradually envelop Manhattan. The Edge is basically across the street from AP's most recently vacated headquarters, while the current headquarters is across the street from One Trade Center, the distant skyscraper by the water that is so prominent in my photos.







Photos by Malcolm Ritter

About The Edge:

Opened in 2019, The Edge is one of the latest additions to New York's ever-changing skyline. It is the highest outdoor observation deck in the United States and is located on the West Side near Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea, and Penn Station.

Soaring above Manhattan, The Edge is situated 1,100 feet in the air on the 100th and 101st floors of the North Tower at 30 Hudson Yards, making this elevated destination

a prime vantage point to see New York City.

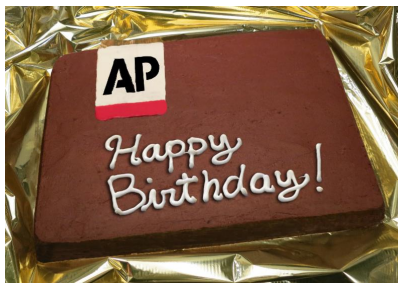
As soon as you step foot onto Edge's 225 sq ft triangular platform, you're sure to experience a huge adrenaline rush. The unparalleled, 360-degree views of the city will take your breath away. If you time it up right, you can also catch marvelous sunsets from the observation deck.

There is truly nothing like discovering the Big Apple from up above. With panoramic sights of the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, the Hudson River, Central Park, and plenty more, a visit to Edge New York will make you truly feel on top of the world.

Its frameless angled glass walls offer unobstructed views and create the illusion that you're floating above the city, while the portion of the deck covered in glass panels allows you to gaze down to the streets far below. If you are feeling courageous, step into the glass panels that slant at 6.6 degrees as you look down below to the streets!

The Edge is open daily from 10 am to 10 pm, while the last elevator runs 50 minutes before closing. Its central location makes it easy to reach: Buses M34-SBS, M12, and M11 will bring you within a few minute's walk, while the 7 subway will bring you to the Hudson Yards stop, or you can reach The Edge by foot.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Ben Curtis](#)

[Jim Hood](#)

Stories of interest

Opinion | The Donald Trump indictment: how the media is covering the story (Poynter)

By: Tom Jones

What a week. And there's plenty more to come.

According to The Washington Post, former President Donald Trump is expected to appear in federal court in Washington today for his arraignment on charges that he tried to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election and that his actions played a key role in the Jan. 6 insurrection.

So what has been the reaction since Tuesday evening when this latest indictment came down?

Well, let's start with former vice president and current Republican presidential candidate Mike Pence. He appeared on Fox News and told host Martha MacCallum, in no uncertain terms, what happened on Jan. 6.

Pence said, "Let's be clear on this point. It wasn't that they asked for a pause. The president specifically asked me and his gaggle of crackpot lawyers asked me to literally reject votes, which would have resulted in the issue being turned over to the House of Representatives and, literally, chaos would have ensued."

Read more [here](#).

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Trump Dines With Fox News Executives After Learning of Third Indictment (New York Times)

By Jonathan Swan and Maggie Haberman

Shortly after learning he was being indicted a third time, former President Donald J. Trump had a private dinner with the top leadership at Fox News as they lobbied him to attend the first Republican presidential primary debate this month, three people familiar with the event said.

The dinner between Mr. Trump, the Fox News president Jay Wallace and the network's chief executive, Suzanne Scott, was held in a private dining room at Mr. Trump's golf club in Bedminster, N.J., according to two of the people familiar with the event. The dinner was scheduled before the indictment news.

Mr. Trump has been vocal about probably skipping the first debate, which Fox News is hosting with the Republican National Committee on Aug. 23 in Milwaukee, as well as the second, planned for September at the Reagan Presidential Library in California. He said last Thursday that it would be "sort of foolish" or even "stupid" to attend the debates, according to an interview with Breitbart News published on Wednesday.

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

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The Oregonian to cut print days to 4 a week (Oregonian)

By Jeff Manning

The Oregonian/OregonLive will discontinue printing a newspaper on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, bringing an end to 142 years of daily print publication early next year.

The change takes effect Jan. 1. It is not expected to affect news staffing or news gathering operations. The newsroom will continue to publish digital editions of the newspaper, and stories on OregonLive, seven days a week.

The company moved to four-day-a-week home delivery a decade ago. It continued to print a small run of papers on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, primarily for newsstand sales, but some avid readers made arrangements with their newspaper carrier to deliver all seven days.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Tim Marsh.

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Ex-WA newspaper editor pleads not guilty to paying girls for sexually explicit images (AP)

By The Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — A former Spokesman-Review newspaper editor arrested and accused of paying girls for sexually explicit images pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to nearly a dozen charges.

Steven Smith, 73, pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of possession of depictions of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, KHQ-TV reported. He has remained in Spokane County Jail on a \$25,000 bail since his arrest on July 20.

Smith was executive editor of The Spokesman-Review in Spokane from 2002 to 2008.

An account in Smith's name for a mobile cash payment service was linked to an investigation into children using social media to send sexually explicit photos of themselves in exchange for money sent to them via the app, according to court documents.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Steve Graham.

The Final Word

Advice from a recovering journalist (Editor and Publisher)

Jill Jackson | for Editor & Publisher

Nearly three years ago, I left journalism. I still loved the work and the adrenaline rush that accompanied a breaking news story but was burning out fast, leading NPR member station KUOW's newsroom in Seattle.

We were all reeling from covering the pandemic, racial strife and nightly protests requiring bulletproof vests and gas masks. The vests were in such short supply we had to coordinate handoffs outside my house each day. I'd snap a picture of my colleagues as they came by for the vests or other PPE, their eyes smiling behind their masks despite our world falling apart.



For my entire adult life, journalism was also my identity. I'd produced interviews with presidents, 9/11 survivors and CEOs and roamed the halls of Congress following the daily legislative grind.

In 2020, however, my priorities shifted. With one child tackling first-grade remote school and the other a little masked preschooler, it was time for more stability. I chose a new career that I previously considered to be selling out. Journalism is supposed to be a calling, and I was abandoning it for a job.

Luckily, this second career is surprisingly fulfilling. As a communications and public affairs consultant, I'm in the room where critical decisions are made, and our work can influence many — from large corporations to the most vulnerable in our society. I can still make a difference.

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - Aug. 3, 2023



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Aug. 3, the 215th day of 2023. There are 150 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 3, 2019, a gunman opened fire at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, leaving 22 people dead; prosecutors said Patrick Crusius targeted Mexicans in hopes of scaring Latinos into leaving the U.S., and that he had outlined the plot in a screed published online shortly before the attack. (A man who was wounded in the shooting died in April 2020 after months in the hospital, raising the death toll to 23.)

On this date:

In 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos, Spain, on a voyage that took him to the present-day Americas.

In 1916, Irish-born British diplomat Roger Casement, a strong advocate of independence for Ireland, was hanged for treason.

In 1936, Jesse Owens of the United States won the first of his four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics as he took the 100-meter sprint.

In 1949, the National Basketball Association was formed as a merger of the Basketball Association of America and the National Basketball League.

In 1966, comedian Lenny Bruce, whose raunchy brand of satire and dark humor landed him in trouble with the law, was found dead in his Los Angeles home at age 40.

In 1972, the U.S. Senate ratified the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In 1981, U.S. air traffic controllers went on strike, despite a warning from President Ronald Reagan they would be fired, which they were.

In 1993, the Senate voted 96-to-3 to confirm Supreme Court nominee Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

In 1994, Arkansas carried out the nation's first triple execution in 32 years. Stephen G. Breyer was sworn in as the Supreme Court's newest justice in a private ceremony at Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist's Vermont summer home.

In 2005, fourteen Marines from a Reserve unit in Ohio were killed in a roadside bombing in Iraq.

In 2014, Israel withdrew most of its ground troops from the Gaza Strip in an apparent winding down of a nearly monthlong operation against Hamas that had left more than 1,800 Palestinians and more than 60 Israelis dead.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama's trade representative, Michael Froman, vetoed a yet-to-be-enacted ban on imports of Chinese-made Apple iPads and iPhones, overruling the U.S. International Trade Commission and dealing a setback to rival

South Korean electronics company Samsung. Zimbabwe's electoral panel declared that longtime President Robert Mugabe had won re-election by a landslide.

Five years ago: China said it was ready to impose tariffs on \$60 billion worth of U.S. imports if Washington went ahead with its threat to impose duties on \$200 billion in Chinese goods. President Emmerson Mnangagwa was declared the winner of Zimbabwe's presidential election as the ruling party maintained control of the government in the first vote since the fall of longtime leader Robert Mugabe. Las Vegas police said they were closing their investigation into the Oct. 1 shooting that left 58 people dead at a country music festival without a definitive answer for why Stephen Paddock unleashed gunfire from a hotel suite onto the concert crowd.

One year ago: Voters in Kansas rejected a ballot measure that would have allowed the Republican-controlled Legislature to tighten restrictions on abortion or ban the procedure outright. The result was considered a resounding message about the desire to protect abortion rights from a conservative state in the first test of voter sentiment after the U.S. Supreme Court's decision the previous month that overturned the constitutional right to abortion. Warner Bros. axed the "Batgirl" film it had planned for HBO Max, opting to shelve the \$90 million film as the reorganized studio revamped its approach to streaming and DC Comics films. The decision was one without any obvious parallel in recent Hollywood history.

Today's Birthdays: Football Hall of Fame coach Marv Levy is 98. Actor Martin Sheen is 83. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Lance Alworth is 83. Lifestyle guru Martha Stewart is 82. Singer Beverly Lee (The Shirelles) is 82. Movie director John Landis is 73. Actor JoMarie Payton is 73. Actor Jay North (TV: "Dennis the Menace") is 72. Hockey Hall-of-Famer Marcel Dionne is 72. Actor Philip Casnoff is 69. Actor John C. McGinley is 64. Rock singer-musician Lee Rocker (The Stray Cats) is 62. Rock singer James Hetfield (Metallica) is 60. Rock musician Stephen Carpenter (Deftones) is 53. Hip-hop artist Spinderella (Salt-N-Pepa) is 52. Actor Brigid Brannagh is 51. NFL quarterback Tom Brady is 46. Actor Evangeline Lilly is 44. Actor Mamie Gummer is 40. Olympic gold medal swimmer Ryan Lochte is 39. Actor Jon Foster is 39. Actor Georgina Haig is 38. Pop-rock musician Brent Kutzle (OneRepublic) is 38. Rapper Shelley FKA DRAM is 35.

Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that reaches more than 1,800 retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013. Past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Midwest vice president based in Kansas City.

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

Here are some suggestions:

- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.

- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.

- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.

- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.

- **"A silly mistake that you make"** - a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.

- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

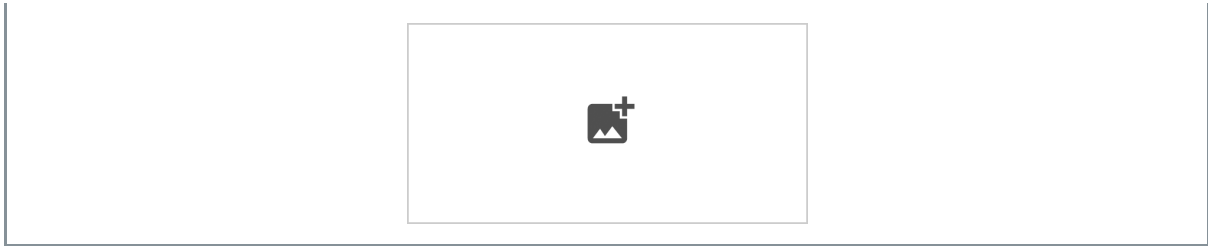
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

- **Most unusual place a story assignment took you.**

Paul Stevens

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