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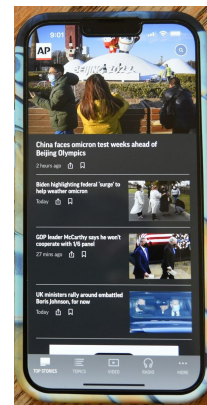
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# Connecting

Sept. 18, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Monday morning on this Sept. 18, 2023,

The United Auto Workers strike against Detroit’s Big Three automakers enters into its fourth day – and prompts one of our Connecting colleagues to share his memories of covering a 21-day strike by the UAW against Ford Motor Co. nearly 50 years ago.

The story by our colleague and former AP Detroit auto writer **Owen Ullmann** leads today’s Connecting - and tells how a chance encounter with a cleaning lady led to an AP scoop.

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

Paul

## Memories of a UAW auto strike

**Owen Ullmann** - The current UAW strike brought back memories of my coverage of a 21-day strike by the UAW against Ford Motor Co. in 1976, when I was a 28-year-old auto reporter for the AP in Detroit. I remember the Sept. 15-Oct. 6 strike well because it provided one of my big scoops at the AP.

Reporters covering the labor dispute hung out at the press room at Ford headquarters in Dearborn, and the press room was packed amid rumors that the company and union--then led by Leonard Woodcock--were close to a settlement. Both sides refused to provide any guidance other than to say that they were making progress. The only on-background tidbit I picked up from the company PR folks was that if a tentative settlement was reached, then Ford CEO Henry Ford II would postpone a planned business trip to London that night to sign off on a new contract.

As nighttime approached, I decided to go for a walk in the corridor outside the press room to stretch my legs. As I strolled down the hall, I encountered a cleaning lady who was pushing a cart toward me. I asked why she was working so late, and she told me that she had been asked to come in to straighten Mr. Ford's bedroom suite on the top floor and turn down the bed because he would be spending the night there. I asked, "Are you sure he's staying?" She replied, "Oh, yes, I saw him and he was very pleasant and wished me a good evening."

I dashed back to the pressroom and asked one of the Ford PR men to confirm that the CEO had postponed his London trip. He asked how I knew. I refused to say, of course, and he refused to confirm or deny it. But I got the strong sense that he was confirming it.

I called the AP office and dictated a carefully hedged lead that the two sides appeared to be on the verge of a settlement, citing as evidence word from an "informed source" that Henry Ford II had delayed a trip to London to be on hand to approve it. Immediately, the phones of other reporters rang, as their editors asked them to match the AP bulletin that just moved on the wire. They turned and looked at me, wondering how I got the story.

I then sat there for what seemed like a painful eternity, worrying that I had filed an erroneous report. Finally, late that night the two sides announced a tentative deal and I could finally breathe a sigh of relief. The episode reminded me during my later career that sources for a serendipitous scoop can come from the most unlikely places.

## Setting 'gold standard' in environmental reporting: Traverse City-based AP reporter leaves legacy



In his 43-year career, John Flesher, Associated Press environmental writer based in Traverse City, worked on major news stories with other AP writers across the country. Special to the Record-Eagle/Scott D. Harmsen

**By Elizabeth Brewer and Bill O'Brien  
Traverse City Record-Eagle**

TRAVERSE CITY — Standing in front of a faded Michigan road map, veteran journalist John Flesher reminisced.

This state has been “home” for almost 35 years, after Flesher moved from Washington, D.C., to Traverse City to work as a regional reporter covering the state of Michigan for The Associated Press.

“My initial thought was ‘Michigan? — I don’t know anything about Michigan, except they made cars, and that was about all I knew,’” Flesher said. “But it was a way to get my foot in the door in Washington... I was hoping to do that for a few years and maybe get moved over to the national staff and get a beat of some kind.”

But, like the saying goes, life is what happens while you’re making other plans.

After a few years of covering the Wolverine state from D.C., Flesher and his wife Sharon “sort of switched gears and decided we didn’t want to be career Washingtonians” and agreed to move somewhere else to start a family.

In the spring of 1992 they relocated to Traverse City, where Flesher established a home base within the Record-Eagle newsroom.

Here, he covered some of the biggest news stories in Michigan, throughout the country and beyond.

Read more [here](#).

# Cruising to Canada & Dodging Hurricane Lee



**From left: Amanda Barnett, Linda Salter Ochsner and Diana Heidgerd at the Brooklyn Cruise Port before boarding the Emerald Princess on Saturday, Sept. 9, 2023, to begin a weeklong Northeast & Canada voyage that was interrupted by Hurricane Lee. Photo by Amanda Barnett.**

**[Diana Heidgerd](#)** - DALLAS - What was planned as my leisurely roundtrip cruise from New York City to Canada turned into a week of heavy fog and dodging Hurricane Lee.

I was with former Dallas AP and Washington BNC staffer Amanda Barnett from Georgia and my best friend Linda Salter Ochsner from South Dakota as our journey began Saturday, Sept. 9, aboard the Emerald Princess.

It was our first cruise together since a 2018 British Isles trip when our ship, the Pacific Princess, diverted to rescue three men from a lifeboat after their fishing boat sank in the North Sea. You might remember that one: [Cruise ship rescues 3 fishermen from North Sea; 2 missing](#). | [AP News](#)

This time we were bound for the Northeast with stops in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Maine before heading to Saint John, New Brunswick, and Halifax, Nova Scotia. A crewmember told me the ship carried about 2,900 passengers. The Emerald Princess typically has a crew of about 1,200.

My personal weather concerns began a few days before we left port in NYC as Lee churned farther south. Stops in Newport and Boston, including lunch on Monday, Sept. 11, with retired AP staffer Sylvia Wingfield, seemed fine. But I became uneasy when we reached Maine, did a bus tour along parts of the coast and saw that boats of all sizes were being hauled from the water as Lee became more threatening.

We made it to Saint John on Wednesday, Sept. 13, as the weather worsened. Foggy wouldn't even begin to describe the unable-to-see-beyond-our-balcony conditions at sea.

Capt. Giuseppe Castellano put out a notice that the Emerald Princess would no longer call at Halifax the following day and would instead head for port in New York City – cutting our cruise short by one day – in his words “in order to stay well clear of the approaching storm.”

Castellano assured passengers that the ship was strong, built to withstand such storms and that he was dedicated to making sure everyone was safe. The captain said he'd spent several nights sleeping on the bridge to oversee the ship amid the heavy fog and the approaching hurricane.

In my opinion Castellano, whose efforts to circumvent Hurricane Lee reassured me while in such treacherous seas, truly lived up to his formal title: “Master, Emerald Princess.”

We'd spent the week checking online hurricane updates and watching hours of weather reports on the TV in our cabin. I awoke around 5 a.m. Friday to look beyond our balcony and see the lights along the coast of New York City. The fog had finally

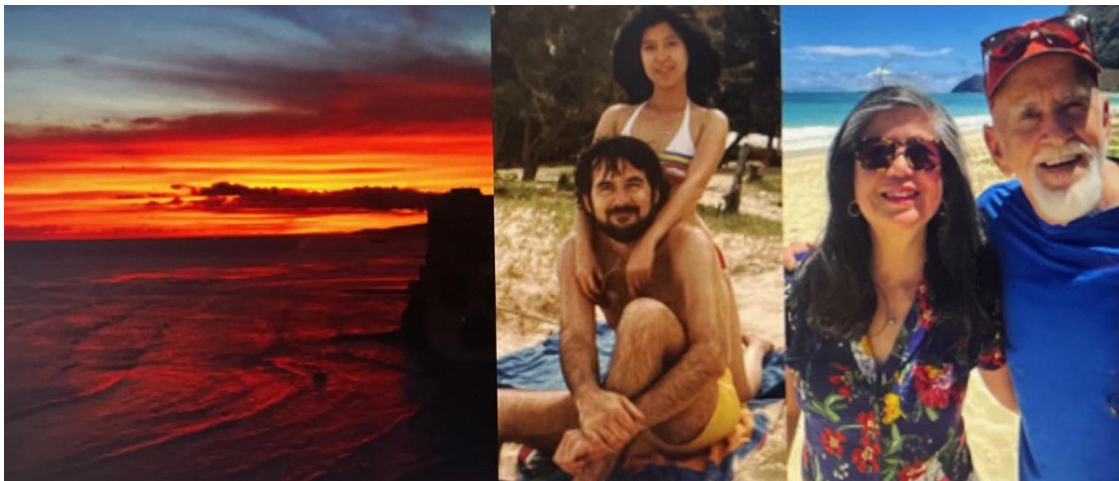
lifted and we safely docked in Brooklyn, then headed to LaGuardia Airport to catch flights home.

Amanda returned to Atlanta. Linda flew to Sioux Falls. I reached Dallas about 12 hours after stepping off our cruise ship and spent the weekend trying to stop swaying while walking.

## Joan Meyer - a heroine

[Larry Margasak](#) - I'm sure that readers followed Connecting's outstanding recap of the outrageous search of the Marion County Record and the home of the Kansas newspaper's late co-owner, Joan Meyer. I just realized that I neglected, until now, to watch the video of Ms. Meyer, in her robe and walker, yelling at the officers to get out of her house. Too bad that she passed away soon afterward. I would have loved the chance to tell her she was one of journalism's great heroines.

## A visit back to where he fell in love



[Ron Edmonds](#) – A visit back to Waimanalo Beach Park in Hawaii where I first romanced and fell in love with Grace 45 years ago. We met there when we worked at the Honolulu Star-Bulletin and we worked together on her first assignment as a cub reporter. Grace later covered the courts and legislature and I became Chief Photographer. I later whisked her off to California when I was recruited by UPI to return to the mainland. The trip was a great anniversary present from our daughter for our 44th wedding anniversary.

***BEST OF THE WEEK — FIRST WINNER***  
**AP team provides fast — and exclusive —  
 coverage of devastating Morocco  
 earthquake**



Sam Metz had been on the job for four days. The newly appointed North Africa reporter had just arrived in Rabat, fresh from Utah, when Morocco's strongest earthquake in more than a century hit late Friday night.

As Metz got news alerts and a story going, photographer Mosa'ab Elshamy — an experienced Morocco hand — knew exactly what to do. He organized a car and driver in the middle of the night, and the duo headed to the scene hours away, navigating rubble-blocked roads toward the epicenter. Their all-nighter paid off: AP had the first international journalists on-site.

Both Elshamy and Metz shot live video and clips from their phones as Brussels-based video journalist Mark Carlson rushed to get to Morocco with a LiveU unit and satellite phone (at the Casablanca airport, Carlson's official customs entry form was but a hand-written attestation, in blue ink, that he was a "journaliste de video pour l'agence de presse s'appelle Associated Press"). Africa News Director Andy Drake, thanks to his own experience in Morocco, negotiated entry for the equipment. Moroccan freelancers stepped up to keep AP ahead, while the team on the ground comforted parents who lost their children and shared villagers' pleas with the world for more help. Meanwhile, colleagues from around the world pitched in, pulling together help from all formats to cover the main story, produce sidebars and navigate complicated logistics.

Read more [here](#).

***BEST OF THE WEEK — SECOND WINNER***

**Focus on trends, viral moments helps AP's  
US Open team score big wins**



The team covering this year's buzzy U.S. open brought a renewed aggressiveness to the annual Grand Slam tournament by quickly jumping on, reporting and filing the interesting, quirky angles outside the lines of the matches, and in the process expanding the audience far beyond just tennis and sports fans.

It's part of a new direction in AP Sports that seeks to tailor coverage of major sporting events for the social media age, with quick recognition and filing of highly viral, shareable moments and angles that transcend the sports audience and, in turn, draw eyeballs back to the stellar AP stories and analysis about winners and losers of the actual matches.

Howard Fendrich, Brian Mahoney and James Martinez more than met that mandate.

Fendrich, AP's tennis writer who has traveled the world covering major events for more than two decades, gave the AP team its marching orders. The two-week run of the tournament also included deeply reported takeouts that met the mandate, including an AP analysis in coordination with the climate team on how global warming is causing temperatures to rise at the U.S. Open and other Grand Slam events — a story that was refired last week during the hottest days of the tournament. And one story looked at an environmental issue most tennis players know nothing about, the difficulty of recycling tennis balls that sends nearly all of the 330 million balls made each year into the garbage, and most to landfills where they can take more than 400 years to decompose.

Read more [here](#).

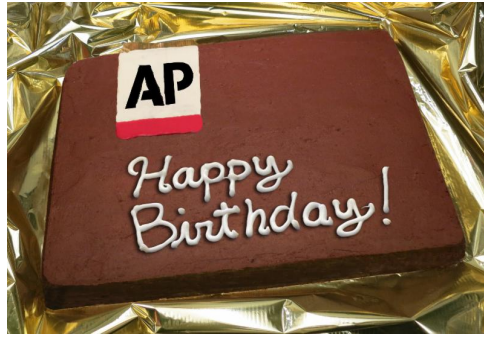
## Ah, the great outdoors





**Paul Stevens** – What better way to spend a gorgeous Saturday afternoon than to invite your best friend on a convertible ride to the park. That’s what my Ollie did, and his bestie Scotch was eager to oblige. Must say the park trails cleared when they saw two goofy goldendoodles headed their way.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



## [Erin Madigan](#)

# Stories of interest

## ***Trump refuses to say in a TV interview how he watched the Jan. 6 attack unfold at the US Capitol*** (AP)

BY MICHELLE L. PRICE

NEW YORK (AP) — Former President Donald Trump repeatedly declined in an interview aired Sunday to answer questions about whether he watched the Capitol riot unfold on television, saying he would “tell people later at an appropriate time.”

Trump, the current front-runner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, refused to say on NBC’s “Meet the Press” how he spent Jan. 6, 2021, once the insurrection began and whether he made phone calls as his supporters stormed the seat of American democracy.

“I’m not going to tell you. I’ll tell people later at an appropriate time,” Trump told moderator Kristen Welker after she asked if he spent that afternoon watching the attack on television in a dining room at the White House.

Trump’s former aides have said he sequestered himself in the room off the Oval Office to watch, at times even rewinding and rewatching some parts.

In the interview, taped Thursday at Trump’s golf club in New Jersey, Trump refused to say who he called as the violence unfolded. “Why would I tell you that?” he said.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***An ode to the newspaper sports section, as it gasps for air*** (Washington Post)

Perspective by Barry Svrluga

If it seems odd for a sports columnist at one major metropolitan newspaper to lament the shuttering of the sports section at another major metropolitan newspaper, that's because it is. But as the New York Times sports page and sports staff enter their final days as we knew them, it feels right to acknowledge what is lost for all of us. The great American newspaper sports section might not be dead. But it's unhealthy, and who knows the cure?

Sports journalism has changed because all journalism has changed, and there are advantages for the consumer and fan. Results and stats are available in real time. Waiting for box scores and standings to appear the following morning is an idea best presented in sepia. Miss the game? Why read about it? Here are the highlights, whenever you want them. There. You're caught up.

In that environment, there is no need for an all-encompassing clearinghouse that folds together what happened in sports the day before and what will happen in the days ahead and delves into the characters that push those narratives. In the same way ESPN's "SportsCenter" once was a necessary gathering place to digest the day's events, the newspaper sports section was a town square at which a city's teams and stars could be evaluated, analyzed and discussed.

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

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## ***Excessive media criticism is only making the media worse*** (The Hill)

**BY GREG BERMAN, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR**

Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's "Manufacturing Consent," published in 1988, offered a bracing critique of the American mass media. Herman and Chomsky disputed the cherished self-image of the New York Times and other high-prestige media outlets. To them, these newspapers, magazines and television shows were not brave, independent truth tellers — they were propagandists for the powers that be, actively engaged in filtering out dissenting views, particularly from left-wing critics.

The authors wrote that the American media fostered debate only if it remained "faithfully within the system of presuppositions and principles that constitute an elite consensus, a system so powerful as to be internalized largely without awareness."

This kind of media critique was once out-of-the-box thinking. Today it has become commonplace. Indeed, we seem to have entered a "golden age" of media criticism.

Both the left and right now devote an enormous amount of intellectual and psychic energy to identifying and ferreting out media bias. Nothing is more predictable than the Twitter (sorry, X) storm that inevitably follows any big news story that touches on race, transgender identity, policing or any of other hot-button issue.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Bill Sikes.

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## ***Mexican reporter whom U.S. tried to deport ruled eligible for asylum*** (Washington Post)

**By Nick Miroff**

A reporter from Mexico who fled the country after exposing corruption in its military has been granted eligibility for U.S. asylum, ending a years-long effort by the U.S. government to deport him, the National Press Club said Thursday.

Journalist Emilio Gutiérrez Soto received notice this week that the Board of Immigration Appeals has ruled him eligible for asylum, 15 years after he crossed into the United States seeking protection, the organization said.

The National Press Club launched a campaign to help Gutiérrez Soto in 2017, when he was taken into custody by U.S. immigration authorities two months after traveling to Washington to accept an award on behalf of journalists in Mexico.

An immigration judge in El Paso ordered Gutiérrez Soto deported in July 2017, saying he did not believe the reporter faced death threats and the risk of harm if deported. Gutiérrez Soto appealed and spent nine months in U.S. immigration detention while a group of law students at Rutgers University worked to win his release.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Bill McCloskey.

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## ***Arkansas Governor Tried to Keep More Records Private. The Pushback Was Swift.*** (New York Times)

**By Rick Rojas**

When Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders summoned Arkansas lawmakers to Little Rock for a special legislative session this week to cut taxes and ban the state from mandating Covid-19 vaccinations, she added one more request: Overhaul the state's longstanding Freedom of Information Act.

The law, as it stood, endangered her family, Ms. Sanders said, because it did not go far enough in shielding information about her security. She called for blocking the disclosure of such information, and also for other changes, urging lawmakers to limit the release of records related to policymaking and discussions of legal strategy.

"They don't care about transparency," Ms. Sanders, a Republican who took office in January, said in a news conference last week, referring to people she saw as taking advantage of the law, which gives any resident of the state the right to have access to

government records. "They want to waste taxpayer dollars, slow down our bold conservative agenda and, frankly, put my family's lives at stake."

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

# The Final Word



Shared by Charlie Monzella

## Today in History - Sept. 18, 2023



By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Sept. 18, the 261st day of 2023. There are 104 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 18, 2020, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a towering women's rights champion who became the court's second female justice, died at her home in Washington at the age of 87 of complications from pancreatic cancer.

On this date:

In A.D. 14, the Roman Senate officially confirmed Tiberius as the second emperor of the Roman Empire, succeeding the late Augustus.

In 1793, President George Washington laid the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol.

In 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which created a force of federal commissioners charged with returning escaped slaves to their owners.

In 1851, the first edition of The New York Times was published.

In 1947, the National Security Act, which created a National Military Establishment and the position of Secretary of Defense, went into effect.

In 1961, United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold (dahg HAWM'-ahr-shoold) was killed in a plane crash in Rhodesia.

In 1970, rock star Jimi Hendrix died in London at age 27.

In 1975, newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst was captured by the FBI in San Francisco, 19 months after being kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army.

In 1987, the psychological thriller "Fatal Attraction," starring Michael Douglas and Glenn Close, was released by Paramount Pictures.

In 2001, a week after the Sept. 11 attack, President George W. Bush said he hoped to "rally the world" in the battle against terrorism and predicted that all "people who love freedom" would join.

In 2005, "Everybody Loves Raymond" won the Emmy for best comedy in its final season; first-year hit "Lost" was named best drama.

In 2013, former heavyweight boxing champion Ken Norton died in Las Vegas at age 70.

In 2014, voters in Scotland rejected independence, opting to remain part of the United Kingdom in a historic referendum.

In 2017, Hurricane Maria intensified into a dangerous Category 5 storm, surging into the eastern Caribbean on a path that would take it near many of the islands recently devastated by Hurricane Irma.

In 2018, the death toll from Hurricane Florence rose to at least 37 in three states.

In 2021, a billionaire and three other amateur space tourists safely ended a three-day trip to space aboard a SpaceX capsule, becoming the first crew to orbit the earth without a professional astronaut.

In 2022, President Joe Biden paid his respects at Queen Elizabeth II's coffin as thousands of police, hundreds of British troops and an army of officials made final preparations for the queen's state funeral.

Today's Birthdays: Gospel singer Bobby Jones is 85. Singer Frankie Avalon is 83. Actor Beth Grant is 74. Rock musician Kerry Livgren is 74. Actor Anna Deavere Smith is 73. Former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson, is 72. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Rick Pitino is 71. Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., is 69. College Football Hall of Famer and retired NFL player Billy Sims is 68. Movie director Mark Romanek is 64. Baseball Hall of Famer Ryne Sandberg is 64. Alt-country-rock musician Mark Olson is 62. Singer Joanne Catherall (Human League) is 61. Actor Holly Robinson Peete is 59. R&B singer Ricky Bell (Bell Biv DeVoe and New Edition) is 56. Actor Aisha Tyler is 53. Former racing cyclist Lance Armstrong is 52. Opera singer Anna Netrebko is 52. Actor Jada Pinkett Smith is 52. Actor James Marsden is 50. Actor Emily Rutherford is 49. Actor Travis Schuldt is 49. Rapper Xzibit is 49. Comedian-actor Jason Sudeikis is 48. Actor Sophina Brown is 47. Actor Barrett Foa is 46. Talk show host Sara Haines (TV: "GMA3: Strahan, Sara & Keke") is 46. Actor/comedian Billy Eichner is 45. Actor Alison Lohman is 44. Designer Brandon Maxwell is 39. Congressman and former NFL player Anthony Gonzalez, R-Ohio, is 39. Actors Brandon and Taylor Porter are 30. Actor Patrick Schwarzenegger is 30. Country singer Tae Kerr (Maddie and Tae) is 28. Actor C.J. Sanders is 27.

## 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 Central Region 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:

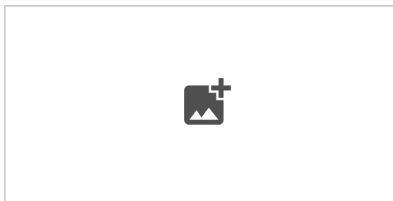
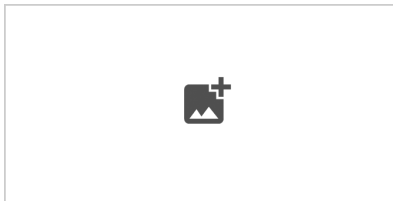
- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.

- **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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