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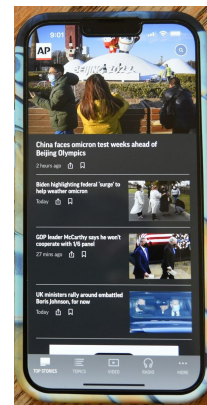
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# Connecting

Sept. 29, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this Sept. 29, 2023,

Today marks six months since **Evan Gershkovich** – a reporter with The Wall Street Journal - was wrongfully detained in Russia.

Wall Street Journal Communications asks that you join the Journal and the broader Dow Jones community for a social storm at 10:30 a.m. ET to help keep Evan’s story front and center **#IStandWithEvan**



Click [here](#) for ways you can use social media to support Evan.

We lead with a story on the AP looking into how many AP pensioners were affected by an apparent security breach in late May 2023 that potentially might affect their personal security including their names and social security numbers. The story notes

that those possibly affected have been notified by letter and that no reports of identity theft or fraud have been found.

Have a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy, live each day to your fullest.

Paul

## **AP, Aetna working to determine how many pensioners affected by security breach; no resulting indication of identity theft or fraud known**

**Paul Stevens** - The AP's Human Resources department is working with Aetna to determine how many AP pensioners were affected by an apparent security breach in late May 2023 that potentially might affect their personal security including their names and social security numbers.

In a recent letter to AP pensioners it identified as potentially affected, Pension Benefit Information, acting in concert with Aetna, said that although it has found no indication of identity theft or fraud in relation to the event, it recommended pensioners who received the letter review their account information and credit reports for suspicious activity and to detect errors for the next 12 to 24 months and report any suspected identity theft.

PBI said in the three-page letter that it provides audit and address research services for insurance companies, pension funds, and other organizations including Aetna (Large Case Pensions).

In the letter: “While we are unaware of any identity theft or fraud as a result of this event, as an additional precaution, PBI is offering you access to 12 months of complimentary credit monitoring and identity restoration services...”

One of our colleagues who received the letter, Lee Siegel, shared it with Connecting.

PBI said it promptly began an investigation of the May event and then conducted a manual review of records to confirm the identities of individuals potentially affected and their contact information to provide notification. It said the review was completed recently.

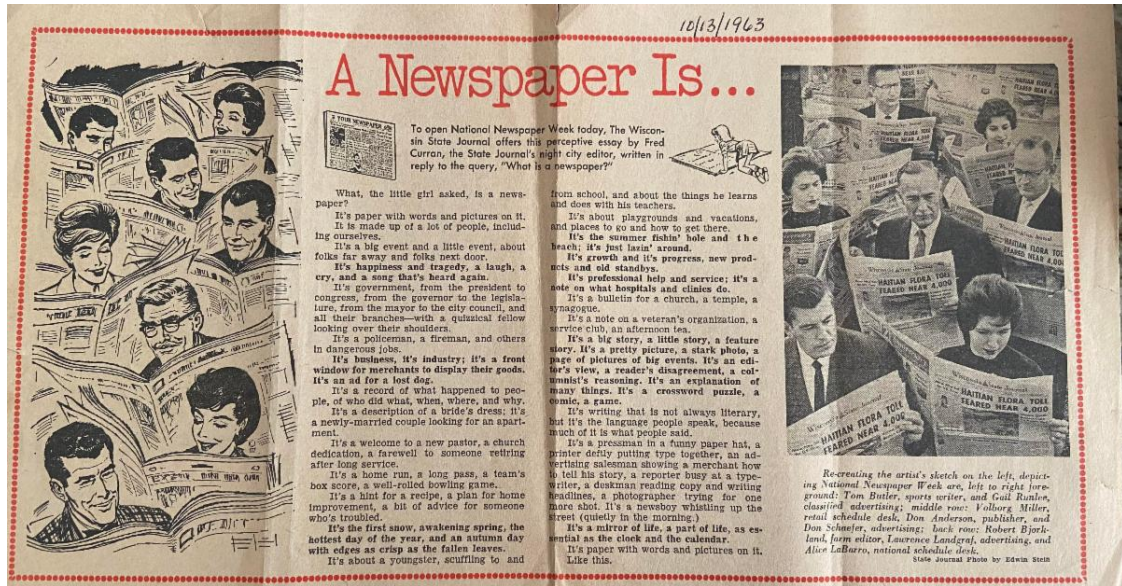
The PBI letter provided a toll-free assistance line and mailing address for those who have any questions.

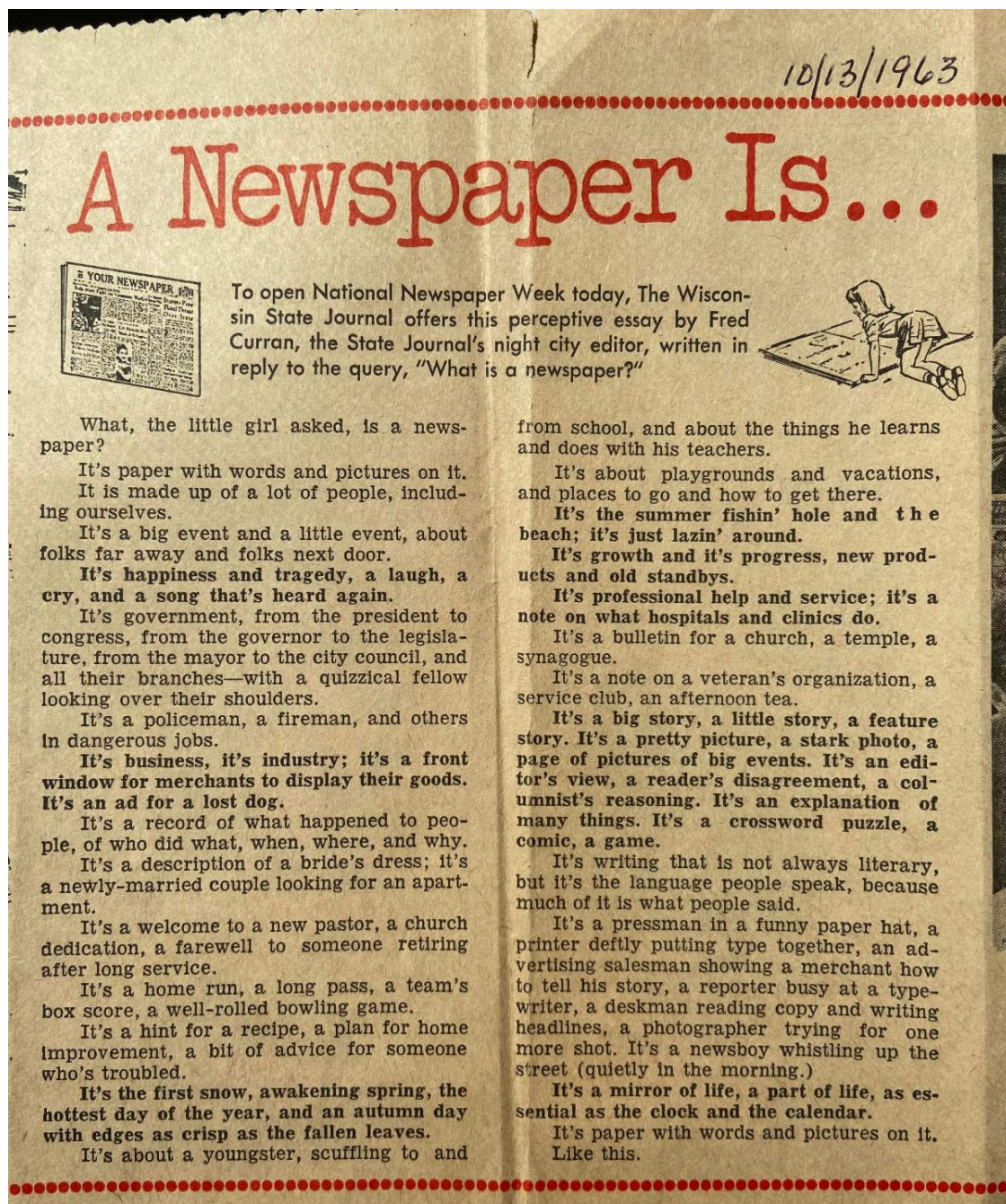
## **Montreal Cognitive Assessment**

**Malcolm Ritter** - In Thursday's Connecting, Mark Mittelstadt suggests the newsletter's Decades Game may be a new MOCA cognition test. He is referring to the Montreal Cognitive Assessment, a 10-minute screening test for mild dysfunction. It's the test Donald Trump boasted in 2020 about passing (see <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/mental-health/trump-cognitive-test-what-montreal-cognitive-assessment-exam-n1234762> ).

The test developers say it should be administered and scored only by trained people. But it is easy to find the instructions online, and my non-trained wife did a fine job giving the exam to her curious husband after Trump put it in the headlines. Highly unofficial, of course, but we were both pleased with the result.

# A 60-year-old story on National Newspaper Week...from the print-only age





**Kathy Curran** - I came across this 1963 article in a Curran memorabilia box and thought it interesting for National Newspaper Week that begins Sunday, Oct. 1.

Fred J Curran was the night city editor at the Wisconsin State Journal in Madison for many years. He was my husband Tim's uncle and the father of another AP man, the late Dennis Curran. (Tim was an AP journalist for 39 years; he died in 2021.)

I'm not sure how readable it is. Old papers are a little hard to duplicate.

## Funny Error... from Nieman no less!

**Cliff Schiappa** - Let me be the 100th person (sorry for piling on) to point out a funny error in Thursday's Connecting. The story about the definition of news from Nieman

Labs used this: Medill School of Journalism, Media, and Missing Conjunctions when it should have been this: Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications

I'm surprised Nieman Labs let that get through!

## Ageism Is the Stupidest Prejudice of All

By DAN PERRY  
For Newsweek Magazine

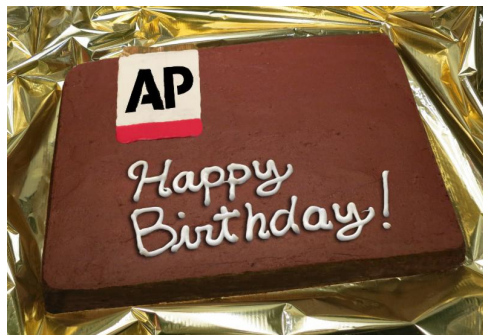
I am an optimist, so I expect that humans will one day attain a higher plane, at which prejudice is unknown. Until then we'll muddle through, scolding others while hoping to ourselves be prejudice-free. We probably hope in vain, for prejudice is everywhere. And while all of it is bad, one version stands out for its idiocy.

Interestingly, the most self-defeating prejudice is the one that's treated with least urgency: ageism. And while racism and sexism are evil and have caused more empirically provable harm, ageism has the numbers: It is the only prejudice that will affect every single person who does not die an early death.

It saddens me that some will assume the topic vexes me because I have myself attained "a certain age." People who are that cynical have made poor choices about their lives, and do not merit my reply. And yes: trolls might scour the archives and discover my indifference to ageism in younger days. But that just proves that advancing years can bring more wisdom (if, yes, lucidity is maintained).

Read more [here](#). Dan Perry is a former AP journalist and a Connecting colleague.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Brent Kallestad](#)

[Gary Gentile](#)

[Mike Mcphee](#)

*On Saturday to...*

[Curt Anderson](#)

[Joe Gugerty](#)

[Kevin LeBoeuf](#)

*On Sunday to...*

[Steve Graham](#)

[Libby Quaid](#)

## Stories of interest

### *You Should Know Who's Funding Your Local Paper*

(Second Rough Draft)

RICHARD J. TOFEL

*Welcome to Second Rough Draft, a newsletter about journalism in our time, how it (often its business) is evolving, and the challenges it faces.*

In the good old days of newspapers, nonprofit papers were rare things—the St. Petersburg (now Tampa Bay) Times had been left in the hands of the Poynter Institute, the Christian Science Monitor was a venture of the church; that was about it. As the business model of newspapers has failed, things have changed: the Philadelphia Inquirer was also given to a nonprofit, hedge fund owners have been widely rumored for months to be looking to spin off many of their loss-making smaller papers into nonprofit hands, other one-off conversions are being explored and the National Trust for Local News (NTLN) has emerged to buy and convert papers, first in Colorado, later in Texas, and most recently all but one of the daily papers in Maine.

All of this, in my view, has been salutary, even if not a panacea. Reducing the target profit margin to zero, as nonprofit conversion effectively does, still requires that revenues and expenses be in balance over time, and local support and smart business management will still be required for that. But nonprofit newspaper ownership is something we should welcome.

Of course, getting the for-profit owners to surrender their assets will, at least in some cases, require a capital investment, so there is a role here for major philanthropies. Again, that's a good thing.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Society of Professional Journalists cancels 2024 conference*** (SPJ)

**By Chinanu Okoli, James Naylor, Laura De la Garza Garcia**

The Society of Professional Journalists board voted Wednesday to suspend the annual 2024 journalism conference, a move that SPJ President Claire Regan confirmed was made as a cost-cutting measure.

Incoming President Ashanti Blaize-Hopkins said it is no secret that SPJ is struggling financially.

"We are trying to come up with different solutions to right the ship. One of those solutions is to take a year off from conventions," Blaize-Hopkins said.

According to Regan, SPJ's nine-member board members voted 7-1 Wednesday to cancel next year's conference, with one member absent.

SPJ will instead focus on fundraising, programming and advocacy in lieu of holding the annual conference. Blaize-Hopkins said she hopes this break could help alleviate some of the financial burdens the organization is experiencing and that it can reconvene in a joint conference with Associated College Press and College Media Association in Washington D.C. in 2025.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Gannett Wants to 'Save Local Journalism.' It Thinks Taylor Swift and Beyoncé Can Help.*** (Wall Street Journal)

**By Alexandra Bruell and Ann-Marie Alcántara**

Lexi Thompson recently took a dip in her parents' swimming pool—not to lounge and relax, but as part of her application to become a newspaper reporter.

"I'm going to tell all of you guys at USA Today why I would be an amazing Taylor Swift reporter," Thompson says in a video as the camera zooms in on her, resting arms flat on the edge of the pool—a shot reminiscent of Reese Witherspoon in "Legally Blonde," in which her character, Elle Woods, submits a video essay to get into Harvard.

USA Today parent Gannett made headlines earlier this month when it posted two unusual jobs: Taylor Swift and Beyoncé reporters. In about two weeks, the publisher received close to 1,000 applications for the jobs—including from Emmy-award winning journalists, an influencer whose Beverly Hills agent reached out about the job and a reporter who currently works at the White House.

Both job listings require applicants to provide a video cover letter, and plenty decided to get creative to stand out from the crowd. Fans flocked to social-media platforms to make their case for the gigs, promote the postings to followers and see how this one ends.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Opinion | Writers Guild wins protections against artificial intelligence*** (Poynter)

**By: Tom Jones and Angela Fu**

Today's newsletter lead item about the writers strike and AI was written by my Poynter colleague Angela Fu.

After 148 days, the Writers Guild of America ended its strike and released details of its tentative agreement with Hollywood studios.

Among the major gains in the proposed contract — which has yet to be ratified by the union's membership — are protections regarding the use of artificial intelligence. AI was one of the last sticking points during negotiations, The New York Times reported.

Studios will not be able to use generative AI to write or rewrite literary material, and AI-generated content cannot be used as source material, according to a Writers Guild summary of the deal. Writers can use AI tools to supplement their work with the company's permission, but they cannot be required to do so. Companies must also inform writers if any materials they give the writer were created with the help of AI.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Len Iwanski.

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## ***Four disabled journalists on how news outlets can support staffers and audience members with disabilities*** (Nieman Lab)

**By HANAA' TAMEEZ**



Athens — Despite the fact that an estimated 1.3 billion people around the world experience some form of disability, newsrooms are “woefully unprepared” to serve audience members or employ journalists with disabilities, according to journalists on a panel on Thursday at the IMEDD International Journalism Forum in Athens, Greece.

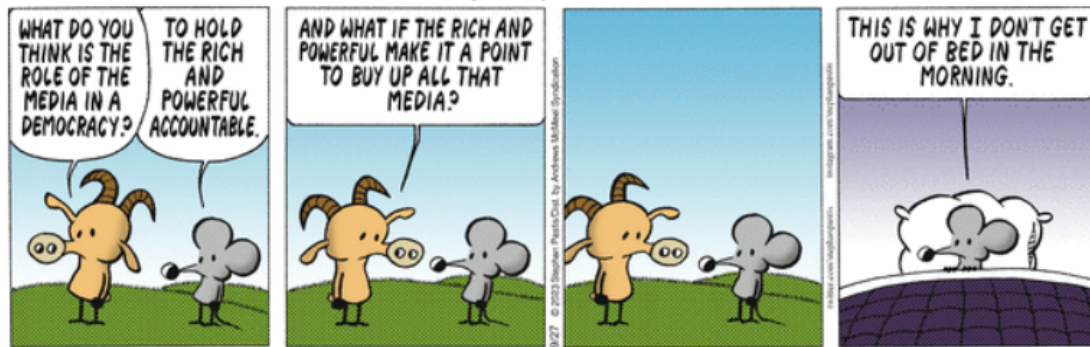
The panel featured three journalists living with disabilities — BBC special projects digital producer Johny Cassidy, Times Radio [UK]’s multimedia reporter Joanna Crawford, and retired Greek journalist Korina Theodorakaki — and was moderated by Hannah Wise, the Kansas City Star’s assistant managing editor for engagement and experimentation.

“If our goal is to provide information to all audiences and all people in our community, we must make our news products accessible,” Wise said. “We must make our newsrooms accessible and inclusive, and we must represent disabled people in our work.”

Read more [here](#). Shared by Len Iwanski.

## The Final Word

### Pearls Before Swine by Stephan Pastis



### Non Sequitur by Wiley Miller



Shared by Len Iwanski

# Today in History – Sept. 29, 2023



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Sept. 29, the 272nd day of 2023. There are 93 days left in the year.

## Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 29, 1938, British, French, German and Italian leaders concluded the Munich Agreement, which was aimed at appeasing Adolf Hitler by allowing Nazi annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland.

## On this date:

In 1789, the U.S. War Department established a regular army with a strength of several hundred men.

In 1829, London's reorganized police force, which became known as Scotland Yard, went on duty.

In 1943, General Dwight D. Eisenhower and Italian Marshal Pietro Badoglio signed an armistice aboard the British ship HMS Nelson off Malta.

In 1962, Canada joined the space age as it launched the Alouette 1 satellite from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, creating the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

In 1978, Pope John Paul I was found dead in his Vatican apartment just over a month after becoming head of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1982, Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules laced with deadly cyanide claimed the first of seven victims in the Chicago area. (To date, the case remains unsolved.)

In 1986, the Soviet Union released Nicholas Daniloff, an American journalist confined on spying charges.

In 1989, actor Zsa Zsa Gabor was convicted of battery for slapping Beverly Hills police officer Paul Kramer after he'd pulled over her Rolls-Royce for expired license plates.

In 2000, Israeli riot police stormed a major Jerusalem shrine and opened fire on stone-throwing Muslim worshippers, killing four Palestinians and wounding 175.

In 2005, John G. Roberts Jr. was sworn in as the nation's 17th chief justice after winning Senate confirmation.

In 2012, Omar Khadr, the last Western detainee held at the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, returned to Canada after a decade in custody.

In 2017, Tom Price resigned as President Donald Trump's secretary of Health and Human Services amid investigations into his use of costly charter flights for official travel at taxpayer expense.

In 2018, Tesla and its CEO, Elon Musk, agreed to pay a total of \$40 million to settle a government lawsuit alleging that Musk had duped investors with misleading statements about a proposed buyout of the company.

In 2020, the first debate between President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden deteriorated into bitter taunts and near chaos, as Trump repeatedly interrupted his opponent with angry and personal jabs and the two men talked over each other.

In 2021, a judge in Los Angeles suspended Britney Spears' father from the conservatorship that had controlled her life and money for 13 years, saying the arrangement reflected a "toxic environment."

In 2022, rescue crews piloted boats and waded through flooded streets Thursday to save thousands of Floridians trapped after Hurricane Ian destroyed homes and businesses and left millions in the dark.

Today's Birthdays: Conductor Richard Bonyng is 93. Writer-director Robert Benton is 91. Soul-blues-gospel singer Sherman Holmes is 84. NASA administrator and former Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., is 81. Actor Ian McShane is 81. Jazz musician Jean-Luc Ponty is 81. Nobel Peace laureate Lech Walesa (lehk vah-WEN'-sah) is 80. Television-film composer Mike Post is 79. Actor Patricia Hodge is 77. TV personality Bryant Gumbel is 75. Rock singer-musician Mark Farner is 75. Rock singer-musician Mike Pinera is 75. Country singer Alvin Crow is 73. Actor Drake Hogestyn is 70. Olympic gold medal runner Sebastian Coe is 67. Singer Suzzy Roche (The Roches) is 67. Comedian-actor Andrew "Dice" Clay is 66. Rock singer John Payne (Asia) is 65. Actor Roger Bart is 61. Rock musician Les Claypool is 60. Actor Jill Whelan is 57. Actor Ben Miles is 57. Actor Luke Goss is 55. Actor Erika Eleniak is 54. R&B singer Devante Swing (Jodeci) is 54. Country singer Brad Cotter (TV: "Nashville Star") is 53. Actor Emily Lloyd is 53. Actor Natasha Gregson Wagner is 53. Actor Rachel Cronin is 52. Country musician Danick Dupelle (Emerson Drive) is 50. Actor Alexis Cruz is 49. Actor Zachary Levi is 43. Actor Chrissy Metz (TV: "This Is Us") is 43. Actor Kelly McCreary (TV: "Grey's Anatomy") is

42. Rock musician Josh Farro is 36. NBA All-Star Kevin Durant is 35. Actor Doug Brochu is 33. Singer Phillip Phillips is 33. Pop singer Halsey is 29. Actor Clara Mamet is 29.

## 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.

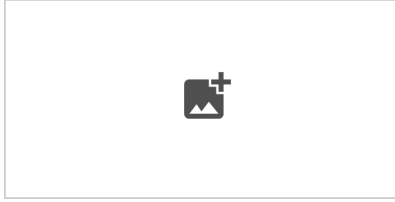


Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

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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