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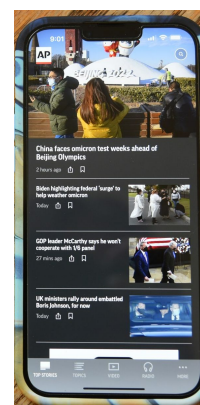
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Connecting

Dec. 12, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this Dec. 12, 2023,

Daisy Veerasingham, the AP’s president and CEO, was among a group of 20 women of color news executives who were spotlighted in a new Women’s Media Center report that outlined their achievements and workplace inclusion strategies at a time when diversity in the journalism industry faces resistance.

WMC’s “Women of Color in U.S. News Leadership 2023,” released Monday, focuses on women in legacy print and broadcast news as well as the fast-growing digital news sphere and details their approaches for creating more inclusive newsrooms, expanding definitions of news, attracting new audiences, and, consequently, increasing the bottom line.

The report noted that Veerasingham - the first woman and person of color to head the 180-year-old global news wire — has spent much of her career as the only woman or person of color in the room. “I started to understand how being the only actually can be a change agent,” she says.

We lead with Veerasingham's comments from the report.

It was a sad farewell Monday to the **News Leaders Association**, successor to the **Associated Press Managing Editors**, that once served as a liaison between the AP and its member newspapers on both a national and statewide basis and did a world of good for journalism.

During its final meeting of the year, the NLA Board of Directors unanimously approved the NLA membership's November vote to dissolve NLA and distribute its remaining assets to nonprofit journalism organizations that can carry on NLA's leadership, diversity and First Amendment focus. More in today's issue.

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

Paul

Making a mark by managing well

From report: **Women of Color in U.S. News Leadership 2023**

Women constitute 70% of senior executives at the Associated Press, says Daisy Veerasingham, the first woman and person of color to head that 180-year-old global news wire.

Named as AP's president and CEO in August 2021, the trained lawyer had spent much of her earlier career as the only woman and/or person of color on a particular rung of the ladder at work. She has learned, she says, to embrace that singularity.

"There are two sides to being the only," says British-born Veerasingham, who is of Sri Lankan descent. "There are the negatives. Often, you feel like a spotlight is being shone on you all the time. You feel the pressure, the obstacles, the hurdles of that.

"But on the other side of it, I started to understand how being the only actually can be a change agent. I looked for allies — and sometimes some of your best allies are the people that are the most different from you — and I looked for the commonalities amongst other people that weren't necessarily always about gender or color."



Daisy Veerasingham, president and CEO, Associated Press
(photo: Associated Press)

She adds that although it's laudable that so many women in the news industry are snagging top jobs, women of color in news media still have a long way to go.

"Progress is being made, but I don't think we're at a breakthrough yet. The biggest challenge for women of color is to ensure that this pipeline of talent is continuing to be developed."

Veerasingham is among women news leaders who say they didn't set their sights on the corner office when they started out professionally. "It was just that I love that I could actually make a difference in terms of directions, strategy, taking people along with me. I have the ability to encourage, influence, mentor, drive, all of those things that I've found people responded to."

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Later in the report, on recruiting, Veerasingham said: "When we're recruiting, we have to think in terms of the big picture, of the skills that you really, really need journalists to have already and the skills that are teachable to newcomers to the craft. I think that opens up the pool a lot more."

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Click [here](#) to access the report - Women of Color Executives Push to Diversify Newsrooms and News Coverage - Women's Media Center Spotlights 20 History-Making Executives of Color

(Shared by Linda Deutsch)

NLA Board approves membership's vote to dissolve nonprofit by June 2024

COLUMBIA, MO; December 11, 2023 – During its final meeting of the year, the News Leaders Association Board of Directors unanimously approved the NLA membership's November vote to dissolve NLA and distribute its remaining assets to nonprofit journalism organizations that can carry on NLA's leadership, diversity and First Amendment focus.

We are thrilled to announce that the [Joseph L. Brechner Freedom of Information Project](#) at the University of Florida is now officially in charge of Sunshine Week, continuing this decades' old tradition for the foreseeable future.

The NLA Awards program has now been transferred to the prestigious Poynter Institute, as part of NLA's winding down of programs as we proceed with dissolution. For more information on the Poynter Journalism Prizes, click [here](#).

All other NLA assets, including the diversity survey, leadership training programs, and historical records of NLA (formed in 2019 in a merger of ASNE, the American Society of News Editors, and APME, the Associated Press Media Editors) will be transferred to

other non-profit journalism organizations in 2024 as we finalize work to secure a home for these important programs.

The resolutions adopted by the NLA Board on Dec. 8, 2023, take effect immediately. During the electronic membership meeting in November, a quorum was reached and 84 percent of the NLA members who participated voted to dissolve NLA by June 30, 2024.

The NLA Board members in attendance also voted unanimously to reduce the size of the 15-member board in 2024 as the organization winds down. The new board will consist of the five incoming officer positions: president, vice president, treasurer, secretary and immediate past president.

We thank all members who participated since NLA's inception and have helped during this year's transition.

About News Leaders Association (NLA): NLA's mission is to help journalists thrive in diverse, sustainable newsrooms with fact-based reporting in service to democracy. To learn more about NLA, go to www.newsleaders.org

(Shared by Myron Belkind)

Wes Gallagher and WWII: A momentous byline for a legendary byliner



Charlie Hanley – In New Orleans for a wedding, Pam and I sat transfixed Monday listening to Tom Brokaw’s narration of a powerful D-day video that’s a highlight of the fabulous National World War II Museum. Glancing to my left, I spotted magnified on the wall this big spread of the day’s Times-Picayune extra edition, and the inevitable Wes Gallagher byline. I must admit a frisson of pride and camaraderie rippled through this old AP guy’s body.

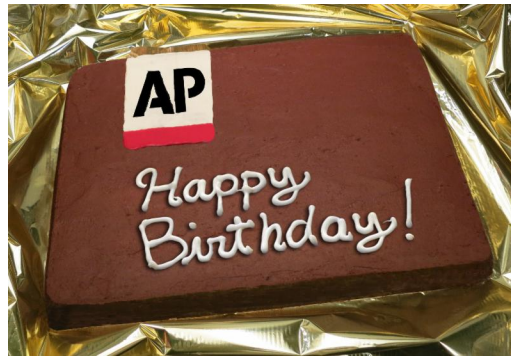
EDITOR’S NOTE: Wes Gallagher was an AP war correspondent during World War II and later served as general manager. **He died in 1997** at the age of 86.

More on AI

[Doug Pizac](#) - Yesterday in my prose I suggested AI-generated or manipulated photos should be called an illustration or digital illustration. I would like to offer a brand-new moniker for this new technology to separate it from the historical use of "illustration." Any image whether it was completely AI-generated or AI-enhanced should be called an "AI Illustration" to differentiate it from an image that was pieced together solely by a human which has been termed "Illustration" in the past.

What do you think? This will let the reader know if an image was done by a machine or human. Does anyone have a better name? If so, let's hear it. And maybe we can be the moral/ethical standard bearer to rename this digital puppy for our beloved industry.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Carole Feldman](#)

[Bill Foley](#)

[Peter Jackson](#)

[Dave Zelio](#)

Stories of interest

Journalists tackle a political what-if: What might a second Trump presidency look like? (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — Even before anyone has cast a vote in a 2024 presidential primary, the attention of many political journalists has shifted to Jan. 20, 2025.

There has been a flurry of recent stories about the implications of a potential second presidency for Donald Trump, and his team's planning for Inauguration Day and beyond. Polls show his continued dominance over Republican rivals and the likelihood of a close general election.

The New York Times reporting team of Charlie Savage, Jonathan Swan and Maggie Haberman has been mining that topic since the summer, and last week wrote in depth about the former president's authoritarian impulses, and the possibility of fewer checks on his power. On Sunday, they examined whether Trump would leave NATO.

A special issue of The Atlantic magazine released last week collected essays by 24 writers on how a Trump presidency would affect things like foreign policy, immigration, journalism and climate change. Editor Jeffrey Goldberg wrote that people should read every one, "though perhaps not in one sitting, for reasons of mental hygiene."

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

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Former Fox host Tucker Carlson is launching his own streaming network with interviews and commentary

(AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — Ousted Fox News host Tucker Carlson is starting his own streaming service, promising to "tell the unadorned truth" to fans for \$72 a year, he announced Monday.

Commentary, interviews, Carlson-flavored news reports and documentaries, even an advice show will be offered on the Tucker Carlson Network, which is essentially staffed by the people who used to work for him at Fox.

The new venture comes more than seven months after Fox abruptly fired Carlson, its most popular host. Fox never publicly explained the firing, and Carlson said on Monday that "it really is one of those mysteries that I'll probably never get to the bottom of."

Read more [here](#).

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Opinion: The shoddy reporting on civilian deaths in Gaza

By DAN PERRY

Because journalism is muchly about clickbait these days, there has been some unserious reporting around the serious issue of the civilian casualties caused by Israel's operation to uproot the Hamas militia from power in Gaza.

Every civilian death is a tragedy (of course!) – yet people do understand that some wars are just and that even such wars will cause some civilian deaths. That goes double for conflicts provoked by fanatical and nihilistic terrorists using human shields and operating from apartment buildings, schools, mosques and hospitals.

I've taken the position that after the Oct. 7 Hamas invasion of Israel, which according to eyewitness and evidence included gang rapes and torture and burning alive entire families and led to 1,200 Israeli deaths, the group must be crushed. It's not an especially original, strange or rare position, but it has attracted the ire of some friends around the region – who see nothing but the resultant civilian casualties in Gaza.

At the same time, I have been appearing on American and Israeli TV urging everyone to show restraint and to distinguish between the 2 million people of Gaza and the terrorist criminals who in 2007 expelled the Palestinian Authority from the seaside strip and took its population hostage. Moreover, I have repeatedly urged Israel to minimize civilian casualties and to better explain actions that caused lives to be lost (most recently today, below). Earlier I argued that Israel should exhaust every option before an invasion of the strip. All that earned ire as well.

Read more [here](#).

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Ashanti Blaize-Hopkins. A one-on-one with the SPJ's new president. (Editor and Publisher)

Episode 215 of "E&P Reports" - A Vodcast series hosted by Mike Blinder

Recent reports concerning the future of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) have stated, with one September post from NiemanLab saying that both membership and revenues are so low that the organization is set to "end the year \$391,000 in the red," according to an audit prepared by an external accountant and dated August 2023. The same article by Sarah Scire featured the sub-head, "If we don't change our thinking, the next incoming president will be the last president."

That new president was sworn in at the October 1, 2023, annual convention in Las Vegas. She is an Emmy Award-winning journalist, journalism professor and associate dean for the Center for Media Design at the Santa Monica College, Ashanti Blaize-Hopkins.

Hopkins also made history on that date as the first black woman ever to be elected to that post.

Hopkins feels confident that the financial issues reported are not insurmountable, stating during this interview with E&P Publisher Mike Blinder, "I can firmly and unequivocally say that I will not be the last president of the SPJ. All of the journalism organizations across the country are facing financial situations. We have the benefit of having a foundation that was created to be in support of the society. That foundation has \$12 million in the bank." She continued, "We are on our way to 'righting the ship,' and I can firmly say that will happen before the end of my term."

Read more [here](#).

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A 3-Year Odyssey in Pursuit of a Mountain Mystery in Argentina (New York Times)

By John Branch

Times Insider explains who we are and what we do, and delivers behind-the-scenes insights into how our journalism comes together.

I got a message in 2020 from a photographer and climber in Argentina named Pablo Betancourt. He had read something I had written years earlier and had discovered something that he thought might make for a good story.

A camera had emerged from the receding ice near the top of Aconcagua, the highest mountain outside of Asia. It still had film in it, with at least 24 frames exposed. And it had a name on it: Janet Johnson. She was part of an American expedition in 1973 and died near the summit under mysterious circumstances.

Interested?

The answer, quickly, was yes.

And so began an international reporting odyssey delayed by Covid and featuring a team of colleagues. The result is *Ghosts on the Glacier*, a story published online this weekend.

Most Americans have not heard of Janet Johnson, or John Cooper, a NASA engineer who also died on the expedition. In the United States in the 1970s, there were a few (often inaccurate) news accounts, but the deaths were considered accidents and forgotten.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Betty Pizac.

Today in History - Dec. 12, 2023



Today is Tuesday, Dec. 12, the 346th day of 2023. There are 19 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 12, 2015, nearly 200 nations meeting in Paris adopted the first global pact to fight climate change, calling on the world to collectively cut and then eliminate greenhouse gas pollution but imposing no sanctions on countries that didn't do so.

On this date:

In 1787, Pennsylvania became the second state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1870, Joseph H. Rainey of South Carolina became the first Black lawmaker sworn into the U.S. House of Representatives.

In 1913, authorities in Florence, Italy, announced that the "Mona Lisa," stolen from the Louvre Museum in Paris in 1911, had been recovered.

In 1915, singer-actor Frank Sinatra was born Francis Albert Sinatra in Hoboken, New Jersey.

In 1917, during World War I, a train carrying some 1,000 French troops from the Italian front derailed while descending a steep hill in Modane (moh-DAN'); at least half of the soldiers were killed in France's greatest rail disaster.

In 1977, the dance movie "Saturday Night Fever," starring John Travolta, premiered in New York.

In 1985, 248 American soldiers and eight crew members were killed when an Arrow Air charter crashed after takeoff from Gander, Newfoundland.

In 1995, by three votes, the Senate killed a constitutional amendment giving Congress authority to outlaw flag burning and other forms of desecration against Old Glory.

In 2000, George W. Bush became president-elect as a divided U.S. Supreme Court reversed a state court decision for recounts in Florida's contested election.

In 2010, the inflatable roof of the Minneapolis Metrodome collapsed following a snowstorm that had dumped 17 inches on the city. (The NFL was forced to shift an already rescheduled game between the Minnesota Vikings and New York Giants to Detroit's Ford Field.)

In 2018, Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's one-time fixer, was sentenced to three years in prison for crimes that included arranging the payment of hush money to conceal Trump's alleged sexual affairs.

In 2019, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson led his Conservative Party to a landslide victory in a general election that was dominated by Brexit.

In 2020, thousands of supporters of President Donald Trump gathered in Washington for rallies to back his desperate efforts to subvert the election that he lost to Joe Biden.

Today's Birthdays: Basketball Hall of Famer Bob Pettit is 91. Singer Connie Francis is 86. Singer Dionne Warwick is 83. Rock singer-musician Dickey Betts is 80. Hall of Fame race car driver Emerson Fittipaldi is 77. Actor Wings Hauser is 76. Actor Bill Nighy (ny) is 74. Actor Duane Chase (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 73. Country singer LaCosta is 73. Gymnast-turned-actor Cathy Rigby is 71. Singer-musician Sheila E. is 66. Actor Sheree J. Wilson is 65. Pop singer Daniel O'Donnell is 62. International Tennis Hall of Famer Tracy Austin is 61. Rock musician Eric Schenkman (Spin Doctors) is 60. Author Sophie Kinsella is 54. News anchor Maggie Rodriguez is 54. Actor Jennifer Connelly is 53. Actor Madchen Amick is 53. Actor Regina Hall is 53. Country singer Hank Williams III is 51. Actor Mayim Bialik is 48. Model Bridget Hall is 46. Actor Lucas Hedges is 27. Actor Sky Katz is 19.

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.

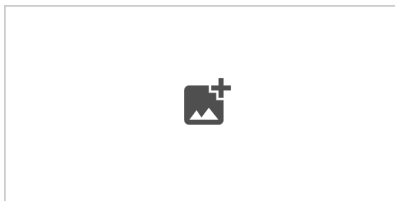
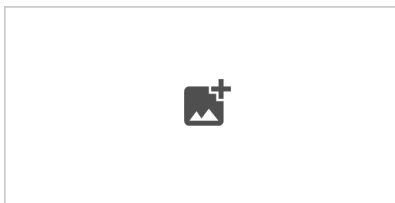
- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

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

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

Paul Stevens

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