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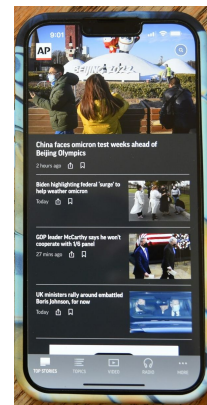
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Connecting

Jan. 10, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this Jan. 10, 2024,

Ever witness a major breaking story and want to alert the AP? Then read on...

The 63-pound door section that dropped from an Alaska Airlines' Boeing 737 MAX-9 last Friday was found in the backyard of a schoolteacher a scant 5-6 miles from the home of our colleague **Steve Graham** in suburban Portland, Ore.

It prompted Steve to write Connecting: "I got to fantasizing what the AP reception at the local bureau would have been if the 'plug' had landed in our backyard and I had tried to report it so the AP would have had the reporting edge. I was Portland news editor 1976-1982, but I retired from the AP in 2002 and don't know anyone currently at the Portland bureau, or New York, for that matter, to whom I could have reached out with photos and/or a story.

"It seems to me that we retired AP folks who have not lost our dedication to the AP are potential assets to the organization if there were some way of providing our bona

fides. Given today's technology, it should be a no-brainer.”

Connecting shared his note with **Lauren Easton**, AP vice president for corporate communications, who responded:

“It’s best to direct your readers to use info@ap.org, which is monitored by the Nerve Center.

Future Connecting issues will contain in the masthead a link for AP News Tips – with that address. Thanks to Steve and to Lauren.

Our colleague **Nita Lelyveld** conveyed her thanks on Facebook for notes of condolence she received on the death of her father, **Joseph Lelyveld**, a former executive editor and foreign correspondent for The New York Times. Nita once worked for the AP in Hartford and Washington and is now managing editor of the Portland (Maine) Press Herald. She said:



“My papa was an extraordinary man out in the world. He also was the kindest and gentlest and most supportive father. And I was never more proud of him than I was after he was diagnosed with Parkinson's. He remained upbeat and engaged and determined to live fully even when he could no longer walk and when it grew very hard for him to talk. I was the luckiest girl in the world to have him with me as long as I did. He showed me the world. He made me love words. He was an incredible role model in so many ways. I could not have loved him more. You can read about him [here](#) if you haven't already. It will give you just a small hint of the magnitude of my loss. P.S. Take the stuff about his personality with a grain of salt. He was loyal and generous and funny and sweet. He just didn't feel the need to fill every quiet moment with talk.”

We lead today’s issue with more of your memories of stories you covered that have stayed with you after many years. If you have one, don’t keep it to yourself – share with your Connecting colleagues.

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

Paul

Connecting series:

A story that stayed with me

Oklahoma City and 9/11

Patrick Casey - Jacqui Cook's missive about her recent visit to the Oklahoma City memorial triggered a flood of memories about the bombing and about 9-11 for me as well. As fate would have it, I worked in the Oklahoma City bureau at the time of Timothy McVeigh's knucklehead attack and was in the AP's midtown Manhattan multimedia offices in 45 Rock on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. The OKC bombing was more of a shocker to me than the strike on the World Trade Center because it was my first experience with such a major attack and because there were so many children killed and maimed in the blast. Sept. 11th, as brutal as it was, seemed more like a brazen sucker punch, an aggressive act of war that united New Yorkers like I had never seen. Most of those hectic New York days remain hazy but I distinctly remember jet fighters patrolling Manhattan and mournful bagpipes wailing during the too-many-to-count funerals across the street from our offices at St. Patrick's Cathedral. The memories of both assaults remain haunting and infrequently visited. My wife and I as a rule never discuss either except on their anniversaries and even then, we are quiet. What also sticks with me about both is the surrealism they generated. Some days it feels as if the bombing and 9-11 happened long, long in the past. Other days it seems as if they occurred just months ago. Sometimes, too, I even think I've become inured to all of the deaths and pain but every now and then a memory lurches from out of nowhere and reminds me that I'm not.

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John Hinckley and Air Florida crash

Larry Margasak - Hinckley: On March 30, 1981, I was covering the federal courthouse in Washington when the stunning news broke that John W. Hinckley Jr. had shot President Reagan and three others (White House press secretary James Brady, Secret Service agent Tim McCarthy, and D.C. police officer Thomas Delahanty).

My first thought was to head to the bureau to see whether I could help out. But I suddenly realized they would have to bring Hinckley to the courthouse to have the charges read. When it became clear that Hinckley would be coming, reporters crammed the small magistrate's courtroom. You can imagine the bedlam, as there were far more reporters than the number of seats. Court personnel decided to send everyone outside and admit the newspeople back in an orderly way. But since I knew everyone in the courthouse, from judges to clerks, I disappeared into the bowels of the building and it wasn't hard to find a friendly staff member to host me close to the small courtroom. It was clear that not all the reporters outside would get back in, and I quietly snuck back and took a seat. Among those shut out: my competitors from UPI, who I later learned were understandably furious.

For me, that was the beginning of a long saga. It involved a trial, intertwined with Hinckley's obsession with actress Jodie Foster and her role in the movie *Taxi Driver*, and the shocking June 21, 1982, verdict: not guilty by reason of insanity. I later became friends with the late chief prosecutor in the case, Roger Adelman, through our mutual love for the Philadelphia Phillies. I know he never got over losing that case, because every time I brought up the trial, he shut down the conversation. And for me the Hinckley saga went on for years, through numerous hearings, challenging aspects of his confinement in Washington's main mental hospital. On June 15, 2022, nine years following my retirement after 48 AP years, Hinckley was released from court

restrictions. Subsequently, on CBS, he expressed remorse and apologized to the Reagan and Brady families and to Jodie Foster.

Air Florida crash: I also was in the courthouse on Jan. 13, 1982, during a ferocious snowstorm. I learned that an Air Florida 737 had smashed into the 14th Street bridge between Washington and Virginia and plunged into the frozen Potomac River. Ironically, the same afternoon, Washington's subway had its first fatal accident, when a train derailed underground, killing three and injuring 25. I was wearing a jacket that was far too inadequate for the blinding storm, regular dress shoes, thin gloves and socks when I walked about a half hour to reach the site of the plane crash. Police were not letting reporters down to the riverbank during the rescue attempt, although TV cameras captured the heroic National Park Service helicopter, its skids virtually in the water, rescuing a few survivors. I snuck past security and reached the bank in time to see responders bring frozen, deceased passengers out of the river. Of course, this was before the cell phone era and there were certainly no phone booths nearby, so my only choice was to walk back to the bureau. "Your assignment," a news editor said, "is to write a first-person color account of what you saw." As I tried to type, my fingers were frozen and wouldn't hit the keys. They finally defrosted with excruciating pain, but I was finally able to write a story. Parts of this tragedy, although I didn't know it at the time, became events that legends are made of:

--A passenger, Arland D. Williams Jr., died after being pulled into the water while helping others out of the Potomac. The bridge was named in his honor.

--Lenny Skutnik, a federal employee who dived into the water to rescue a passenger, was recognized as a hero, invited by President Ronald Reagan to the State of the Union address. The crash killed 74 of the 79 people aboard the airplane and four people in cars on the bridge; four others on the bridge were injured. A total of five passengers and a flight attendant escaped the airplane into the freezing, ice-filled Potomac River and clung to wreckage.

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American Airlines crash in Chicago

Marc Wilson - On May 25, 1979, American Airlines flight 191 crashed shortly after take-off at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, killing all 273 passengers aboard. It was the deadliest aviation disaster in U.S. history.

I was on the crash site for the AP. I saw a priest giving last rites to corpses that turned to ash at his touch. I saw metal, numbered signs planted in the scarred-black ground marking the location and number of bodies.

I was told that the passengers on Flight 191 probably witnessed the crash on the television sets inside the DC-10. For years after the crash, I often dreamed about being seated on the plane, watching the TVs and seeing us die.

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Early lesson about not believing everything

Terry Spencer - My first full-time, non-temp journalism job was at the Indio (California) Daily News in 1988. It gave me lots of good lessons, but it also provided one of my worst moments as a reporter. Still, it was a valuable reminder that things aren't always what they appear.

When I started, my primary beat was cops but I was also tasked with writing a weekly piece called "They Make It Work." It was a light feature on somebody doing good deeds in the community -- I generally just had a few hours to report it and write it. On the best weeks, someone would get nominated by a reader, but on this particular week right before Christmas I had no one. In desperation, I started making calls to places that might have somebody.

I called a convalescent home - and bingo. They had a 13-year-old boy who had just started volunteering a couple weeks earlier. He was helping the residents wrap presents and other tasks and they all loved having a young person around. Perfect. I would be there that afternoon with a photographer.

The kid seemed a bit shy and reticent, but that's not unusual. The administrators and guests gushed about him. When I asked the kid why he had volunteered, he said his priest had suggested it. Wonderful. I went back to the office, banged out my 600 words and all was right in my world.

At least until the next morning when as part of my regular cop beat, I made my daily call to the sheriff's department spokesman, Lt. Dye, to see if anything was going on. He was always a cheery guy, but when he heard my voice this time he just started really laughing. Our conversation went something like this:

What's so funny?

Oh, I was just reading your story about the kid volunteer at the nursing home.

Um, OK.

I bet no one told you, because maybe the nursing home doesn't know, but he's probably the most prolific adolescent burglar we've ever had in the Coachella Valley and the reason he 'volunteered' at the nursing home is that he's working off his community service.

My heart sank, of course -- How did I screw this up? Were there signs I had missed?

The walk to the editor's office got really long all of a sudden. The decision was made that since we didn't normally identify 13-year-old burglars by name in the paper, we weren't going to out him even in this case. The editor was understanding about what happened, but the whole affair put a damper on my holidays.

Ever since, my BS detector has gotten much better, and I always ask questions that might uncover the next hidden burglar. Or at least, I hope.

I don't remember the kid's name. The Daily News was in its final days before being merged into The Desert Sun in Palm Springs and its stories don't show up on newspapers.com, but it looks like the Indio library has reopened after a brief closure. Maybe the paper is on microfilm and a librarian will look up the kid's name for me -- I would love to find out what became of him.

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Sinking of Edmund Fitzgerald

Harry Atkins - The story that has stayed with me to this day was the sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald in Lake Superior in November 1975. After learning one afternoon from a member that a ship may be in trouble, photographer John Hillary and I drove through the night and spent the next three days in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. We were lucky enough to find a private pilot who flew us out over the search area around daybreak. The next couple days we followed up with the crew of a coast guard cutter docked in town.

The story was featured again a few years ago when it was used as an "AP Was There" feature.

And the story resurfaced again in a couple of ways last year when Gordon Lightfoot died. The New York Times, in Lightfoot's obituary, mentioned that he had re-written his epic song when he saw a line in the story about 29 bells being rung at the Mariner's Church in Detroit. It was one bell for each in the crew of 29 men who went down with the freighter.

Now folks were congratulating me again for such telling detail in my copy.

There was just one problem: I never heard the 29 bells. I wrote all my new leads from the Upper Peninsula. There was no way I could hear bells ringing in Detroit. Chances are that someone in Detroit, editing my copy, saw the "bells" note in either the News or Free Press and inserted it into my copy.

This past June, I got a call from the author John U. Bacon. He has a contract to do a book on the Fitzgerald which is to be published in 2025, marking the 50th anniversary of the sinking. Lynn and I spend six months each year in lovely Harbor Springs, Mich. Bacon came up, interviewed me and took me to lunch. Another example, I guess, of the story staying with me.

There is some controversy about why the Fitzgerald sank. Early speculation was that some hatch covers came off, allowing enough water into the holds to sink the ship. I happen to believe the freighter, which had been blown north and nearer the Canadian shore by the heavy November winds, slammed down on some shoals, breaking the ship in two. Underwater photos show each half laying side by side on the bottom, each half facing opposite directions.

All 29 men are still down there.

In 1979 I became the AP Sports Writer in Detroit and didn't do much "real" news after that. Still, it was a great time to be a sports writer in Michigan. The Tigers were one of the best teams in baseball under Sparky Anderson and won the World Series in 1984, the Pistons' Bad Boys won successive NBA titles in the '80s and the Red Wings won successive Stanley Cup championships in the '90s. Michigan or Michigan State went to a bowl game almost every season, so we frequently spent the Christmas holidays someplace warm.

So, I was witness to many great stories until I retired in late 2000. But the Edmund Fitzgerald story just seems to have stayed with me over all these years.

Of course, I still hear from time to time about the day I asked golfer Davis Love III for his father's first name. But that's a story for another day.

BEST OF THE WEEK — FIRST WINNER

AP investigates Russia's cover-up of deaths caused by dam explosion in Ukraine



Over six months after the catastrophic explosion that destroyed the Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine's southern Kherson region, an AP investigation found that Russian occupation authorities vastly and deliberately undercounted the dead. The monthslong AP inquiry was the closest yet to revealing the real number of deaths Russia tried to hide from the dam's destruction in the 22-month war, which Ukrainians believe was carried out to hamper the planned Ukrainian counteroffensive across the Dnipro River. Russia has denied it was responsible.

AP Kyiv correspondent Samya Kullab and news assistant Illia Novikov were working on a different story about how residents of the affected town of Oleshky were returning slowly to Ukraine, taking a circuitous way out of Russia. During their reporting, they were asking people about how many dead people they had seen when a source, who said he had been an informant for the Ukrainian armed forces, said he knew of a mass grave. That sent Kullab and Novikov in a fresh direction, and the story developed from there.

Because of the ongoing war, it was extremely difficult to access people; nine out of 10 people contacted for the story did not want to speak. They were too fearful. Kullab and Novikov, however, managed to access a private chat group through one contact, and from there they managed to reach out to people.

Read more [here](#).

BEST OF THE WEEK — SECOND WINNER

Team shines with story on Native American girl's journey to become first female on Professional Bull Riders tour



Deputy global sports editor Oscar Dixon heard an interesting tidbit at a sports editors meeting in June about a teenager from the Klamath Tribes who was seeking to become the first female rider in the Professional Bull Riders tour. Realizing it would be a great fit for AP, he worked to fund a multiformat project.

The package was a team effort with unmatched access to bull rider Najiah Knight, who is Paiute, and her family that featured engaging video, powerful photos, audio, graphics and informative context gathered over four months of over-the-phone and on-ground reporting in Texas, Oregon and, finally, at the junior national tournament in Las Vegas.

Portland, Oregon-based sportswriter Anne Peterson built a relationship with the family and dug into Najiah's story that illuminated an uphill battle in a sport that's been dominated by males. The reporting uncovered more angles, leading to stories by Las Vegas-based sportswriter Mark Anderson on a female bull riding pioneer and another by Southwest assistant news director Felicia Fonseca on the popularity of rodeo in Indian Country.

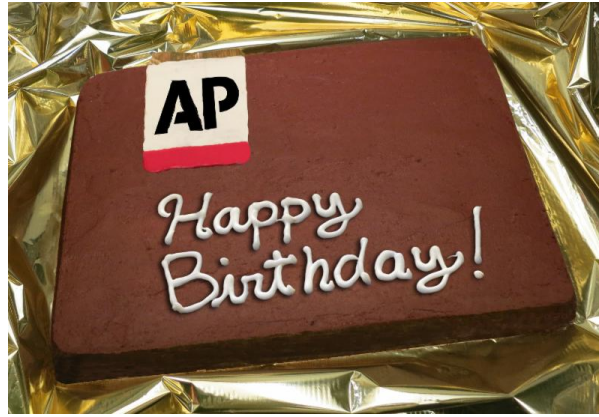
Read more [here](#).

AP Sighting



Long-awaited Aventino, AP Pizza Shop in downtown Bethesda to open this month. Chef Mike Friedman's cuisine will reflect his Italian-Jewish background. **Shared by Bill McCloskey**

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Bob Burns

Stories of interest

Predicting the 2024 future for news media (Editor and Publisher)

Rob Tornoe | for Editor & Publisher

When I was asked to write some predictions for the upcoming year in journalism, the name Clifford Stoll immediately began ping-ponging around my brain.

The name doesn't ring a bell?

Stoll, an astronomer, systems manager and professor, wrote an infamous column in Newsweek in 1995 (way back when it was still a magazine) where he predicted the internet would have no impact on newspapers and called the then-emerging worldwide web a “trendy and oversold community.”

“The truth is no online database will replace your daily newspaper, no CD-ROM can take the place of a competent teacher, and no computer network will change the way government works,” Stoll wrote.

Obviously, Stoll missed the mark with his premature dismissal of what has become the most impactful technological achievement in the past 50 years — for good and bad. We all work online, learn online, pester our elected representatives online, and even find love online.

Stoll did nail one negative aspect of online life we all grapple with today, especially those of us working in remote newsrooms often separated from our colleagues: the lack of “human contact.”

Read more [here](#).

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Kevin Merida Resigns As Executive Editor Of The Los Angeles Times (Deadlines)

By Ted Johnson

Kevin Merida said on Tuesday that he was stepping down as executive editor of the Los Angeles Times, after less than three years in the job.

He wrote in a memo to staffers, “Today, with a heavy heart, I announce that I am leaving The Times. I made the decision, in consultation with Patrick, after considerable soul-searching about my career at this stage and how best to be of value to the profession I love.”

Merida was named executive editor in May, 2021, having previously served as ESPN senior vice president and editor in chief of the Undefeated.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Doug Pizac, Paul Albright.

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The rural journalism business model hasn't failed, but it needs updating; a nonprofit cooperative option beckons (The Rural Blog)

By Al Cross
Director Emeritus, Institute for Rural Journalism

It's become conventional wisdom that the advertising-based business model of newspapers has failed. But that is not true in many small communities, which could become the nuclei of a national enterprise of nonprofit newsrooms that will provide better journalism with sound business practices, including economies of scale.

So says Elizabeth Hansen Shapiro, CEO and co-founder of the National Trust For Local News, who recently announced the creation of a third state-based nonprofit journalism company, in Georgia, adding to those it has in Colorado (24 newspapers) and Maine (22), and says “wild success” would be a total of 15 such companies in the next five years.

Shapiro was interviewed on the Nov. 1 edition of the “Local News Matters” podcast of Tim Regan-Porter, executive director of the Colorado Press Association. When he asked her a question that many journalism funders and advocates ask, “Why save a failing business model?” she said the question is based on “high-profile failings of metro newspapers,” which aren't reflected in the smaller papers the Trust owns or is considering buying.

Read more [here](#).

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Meta to hide posts about suicide, eating disorders from teens' Instagram and Facebook feeds (AP)

BY BARBARA ORTUTAY

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Meta said Tuesday it will start hiding inappropriate content from teenagers' accounts on Instagram and Facebook, including posts about suicide, self-harm and eating disorders.

The social media giant based in Menlo Park, California, said in a blog post that while it already aims not to recommend such "age-inappropriate" material to teens, now it also won't show it in their feeds, even if it is shared by an account they follow.

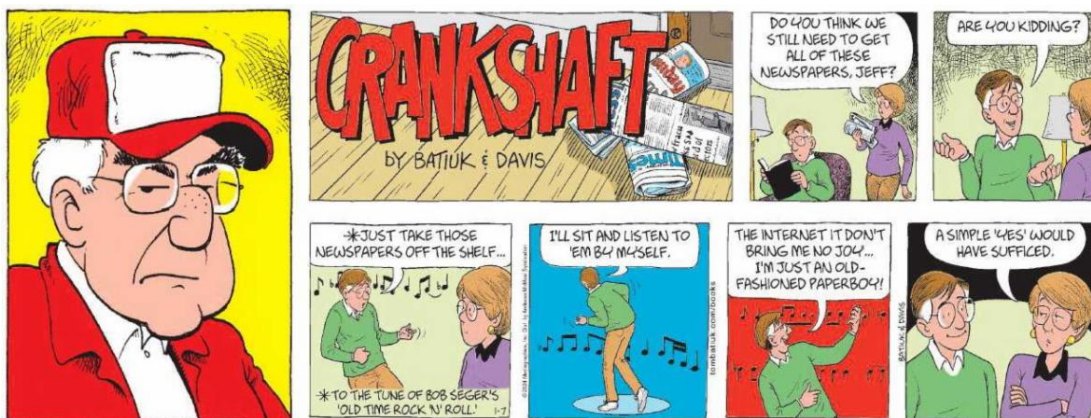
"We want teens to have safe, age-appropriate experiences on our apps," Meta said.

Teen users — provided they did not lie about their age when they signed up for Instagram or Facebook — will also see their accounts placed on the most restrictive settings on the platforms, and they will be blocked from searching for terms that might be harmful.

"Take the example of someone posting about their ongoing struggle with thoughts of self-harm. This is an important story, and can help destigmatize these issues, but it's a complex topic and isn't necessarily suitable for all young people," Meta said. "Now, we'll start to remove this type of content from teens' experiences on Instagram and Facebook, as well as other types of age-inappropriate content."

Read more [here](#).

The Final Word



Shared by Charlie Monzella, Adolphe Bernotas

Today in History - Jan. 10, 2024



Today is Wednesday, Jan. 10, the 10th day of 2024. There are 356 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 10, 1776, Thomas Paine anonymously published his influential pamphlet, "Common Sense," which argued for American independence from British rule.

On this date:

In 1860, the Pemberton Mill in Lawrence, Massachusetts, collapsed and caught fire, killing up to 145 people, mostly female workers from Scotland and Ireland.

In 1861, Florida became the third state to secede from the Union.

In 1863, the London Underground had its beginnings as the Metropolitan, the world's first underground passenger railway, opened to the public with service between Paddington and Farringdon Street.

In 1870, John D. Rockefeller incorporated Standard Oil.

In 1920, the League of Nations was established as the Treaty of Versailles (vehr-SY') went into effect.

In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson, in his State of the Union address, asked Congress to impose a surcharge on both corporate and individual income taxes to help pay for his "Great Society" programs as well as the war in Vietnam.

In 1971, French fashion designer Coco Chanel died in Paris at age 87.

In 1984, the United States and the Vatican established full diplomatic relations for the first time in more than a century.

In 2002, Marines began flying hundreds of al-Qaida prisoners in Afghanistan to a U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In 2003, North Korea withdrew from a global treaty barring it from making nuclear weapons.

In 2007, the Democratic-controlled House voted 315-116 to increase the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour.

In 2011, a judge in Austin, Texas, ordered former U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay to serve three years in prison for his money laundering conviction. (DeLay's conviction was ultimately overturned.)

In 2022, Robert Durst, the New York real estate heir who was sentenced to life in prison for killing his best friend, died at age 78 at a hospital outside the California prison where he'd been serving his sentence.

Today's birthdays: Jan. 10: Opera singer Sherrill Milnes is 89. Movie director Walter Hill is 84. Actor William Sanderson is 80. Singer Rod Stewart is 79. Rock singer-musician Donald Fagen (Steely Dan) is 76. Boxing Hall of Famer and entrepreneur George Foreman is 75. Roots rock singer Alejandro Escovedo is 73. Rock musician Scott Thurston (Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers) is 72. Singer Pat Benatar is 71. Hall of Fame race car driver and team owner Bobby Rahal is 70. Rock musician Michael Schenker (UFO) is 69. Singer Shawn Colvin is 68. Rock singer-musician Curt Kirkwood (Meat Puppets) is 65. Actor Evan Handler is 63. Rock singer Brad Roberts (Crash Test Dummies) is 60. Actor Trini Alvarado is 57. Rock singer Brent Smith (Shinedown) is 46. Rapper Chris Smith (Kris Kross) is 45. Actor Sarah Shahi is 44. American roots singer Valerie June is 42.

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.

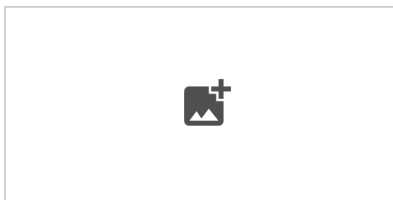
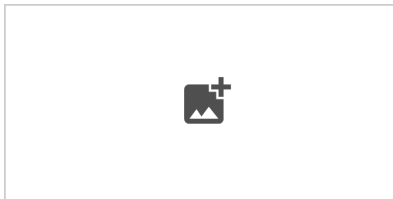
Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

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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