

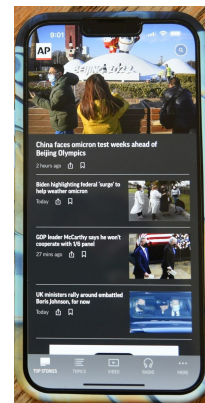
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Connecting

Jan. 30, 2024

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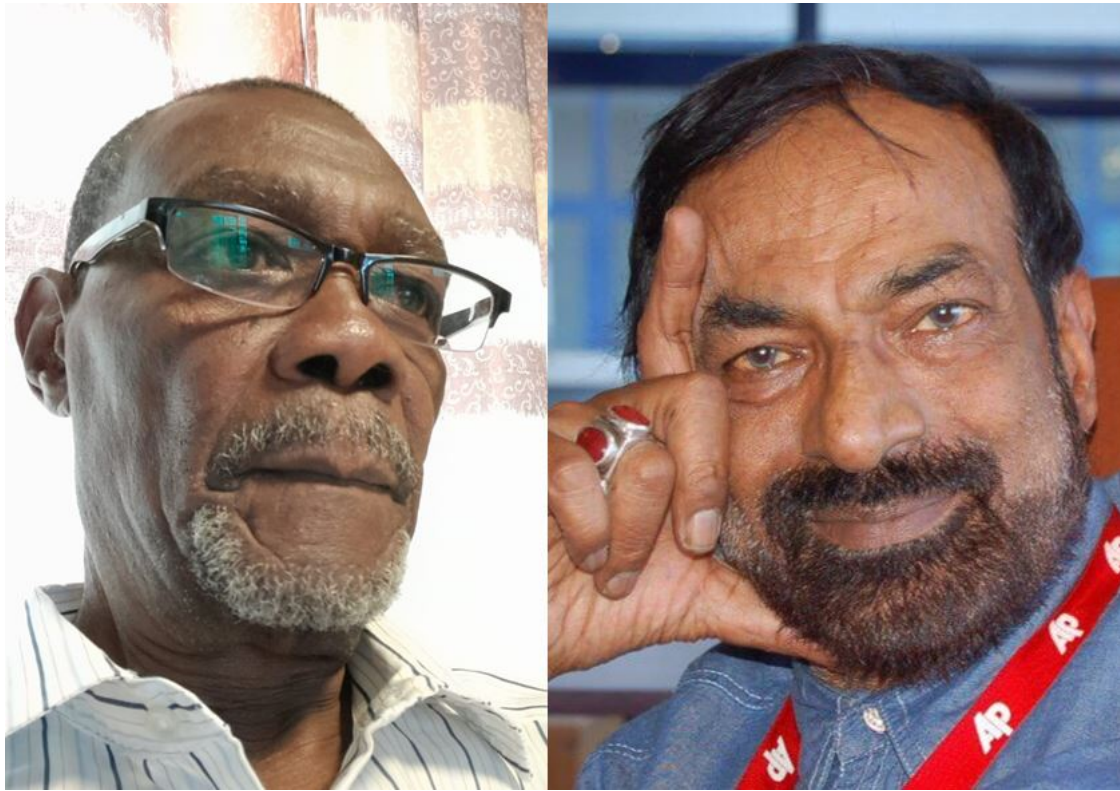
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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this Jan. 30, 2024,

When Connecting published a photo last week of AP Florida staffers gathered at a signing event for Orlando-based correspondent **Mike Schneider**'s book, "Mickey and the Teamsters: A Fight for Fair Unions at Disney," Ye Olde Connecting Editor wanted to know more.

So in today's newsletter, Schneider tells how the book with an intriguing name came about.



Khalil Senosi, left, and Sayyid Azim.

Connecting wants to note that the two Africa-based AP photographers who retired recently, **Sayyid Azim** and **Khalil Senosi**, both were part of the team that won the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for spot news photography for coverage of the embassy bombings. (Also on that team: Jean-Marc Bouju, Dave Caulkin, Brennan Linsey and John McConnico.)

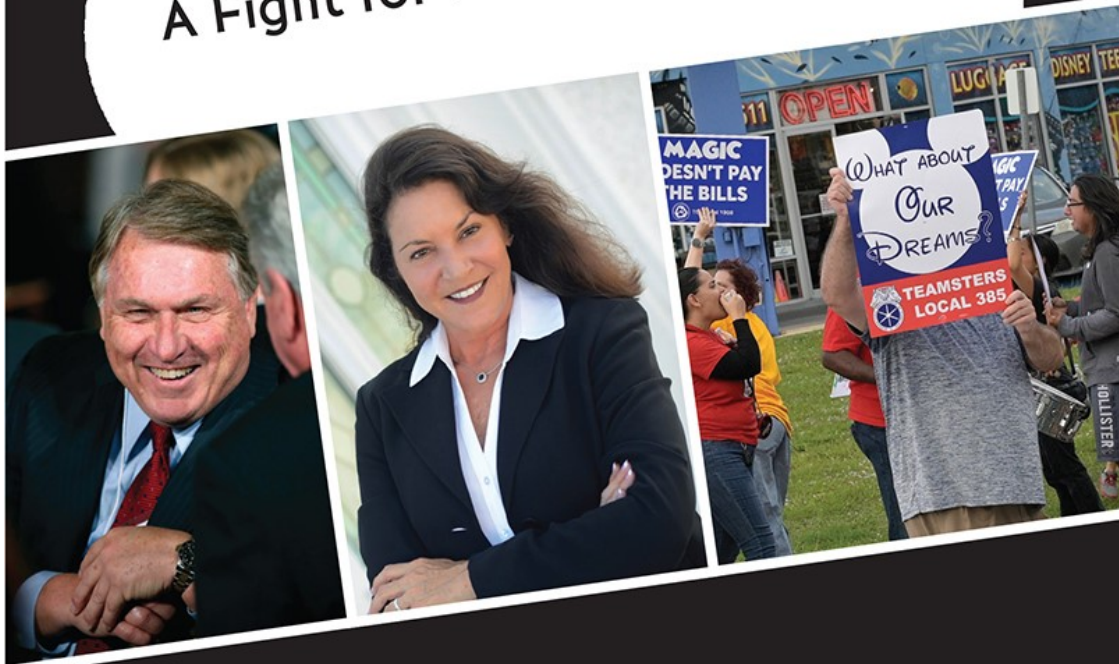
Here's to a great day – be safe, stay healthy, live it to your fullest.

Paul

Life isn't always magic and pixie dust at Walt Disney World

Mickey and the Teamsters

A Fight for Fair Unions at Disney



Mike Schneider

Mike Schneider - Behind the costumes, life isn't always magic and pixie dust for the people who play the iconic characters of Mickey Mouse, Goofy, and Cinderella at Walt Disney World outside Orlando, Florida. In a surprising tale of corruption alongside activism, my new book, "Mickey and the Teamsters: A Fight for Fair Unions at Disney" reveals the little-known story of Teamsters Local 385, the union which represents these performers.

The book's protagonist is Donna-Lynne Dalton, a former character performer who stood up for other Disney performers against deep-rooted problems in the union that was supposed to protect them. I covered this rather niche story as it unfolded in the late 2010s. The book includes exclusive interviews with labor leaders and workers at the park, detailing how the union prevented its members from leaving, severely mismanaged union business, and promoted a culture of hostile leadership.



Members of the Teamsters local felt that they no longer had a voice, and they feared devastating consequences if they spoke up. But Dalton brought the issues to investigators in an act of whistleblowing that threatened her livelihood. In return, the local union fired Dalton and began harassing her and other costumed character performers who opposed its leaders. The story escalated, as I recount protests by the Disney performers and the interventions of James Hoffa, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

"Mickey and the Teamsters" offers a behind-the-scenes look at some of the hidden struggles that surround Disney World, which employs the largest single-site workforce in the United States. Through the efforts of Dalton and others to reform their union and improve the lives of employees at the workplace they loved, I tried to show the importance of individual and collective action to hold unions accountable and preserve their potential to do good.

"Mickey and the Teamsters" was published by the University Press of Florida. It can be purchased at Amazon, Barnes & Noble and other online and brick-and-mortar bookstores.

AP Sighting at New York's Museum of Modern Art



[Francesca Pitaro](#) - I went to the Museum of Modern Art recently to view an exhibit of the Vietnamese-American photographer An-My Lê. Her 2020 photo of the Press Briefing Room at the White House shows AP's seat in the front row. Lê uses a large format camera and her work is monumental in size. You can read more about her and the exhibit [here](#).

And on the grocery counter...



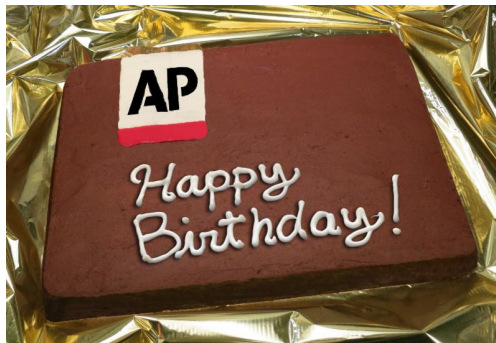
Shared by Ron Mulnix.

A welcome to new U.S. citizens



Mark Mittelstadt - On Friday we proudly welcomed daughter-in-law Mari and her 11-year-old son Moises as new citizens of the United States. Our son Matthew and Mari were married five years ago in her home country of Guatemala. The road to citizenship took nearly that long and had expenses. Mari wore Guatemalan dress for the naturalization ceremony at the U.S. Courthouse in Tucson. She was among 51 new citizens from 21 countries, including Russia, Moldova, Brazil, Canada, Vietnam, the Republic of Congo and France. Mexico was by far the largest group, accounting for approximately half.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Rich Oppel](#)

Stories of interest

First female L.A. Times editor in newspaper's 142-year history talks layoffs and losing journalists of color (NBC News)

By Sakshi Venkatraman

Amid significant layoffs affecting many young minority staff members, the Los Angeles Times has named the first female executive editor in its 142-year history. And Terry Tang, taking over as interim editor, says she's aware of the turbulence she's stepping into.

"It is a challenging time, but it is a challenging time for the entire journalistic industry," Tang told NBC News in an interview. "I'm very excited about meeting this challenge."

Tang has spent 4½ years at the paper, helming the opinion section. Before that, she was at The New York Times for 20 years, holding titles in both editorial and news. She's taking over L.A. Times from Kevin Merida, who stepped down this month along with several other top editors.

This week, the paper gave layoff notices to around 120 journalists, a quarter of its staff. These cuts particularly affected recently hired journalists of color, who were hit by the Times' seniority clause.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Linda Deutsch.

-0-

Texas' Friday Night Lights through the lens of photographer Nash Pils (ESPN)

Dave Wilson, ESPN Staff Writer

On Dec. 7, the Franklin (Texas) High football team was preparing for a state semifinal game against Edna with a customary send-off pep rally at the school.

The Lions are the biggest show in the town of 1,614 about 65 miles southeast of Waco. The 3A powerhouse entered the season two-time defending state champion and was working on making it back for a fourth straight year. But before the band fired up the fight song, there was an important first order of business: a surprise for a local celebrity.

The football team's leadership group called Nash Pils, a 17-year-old junior with Down syndrome, to the gym floor. A naturally gifted photographer, Nash has become the documentarian of a small town's sports programs, and in turn, the football team has become his champion.

Students chanted, "Nash! Nash! Nash!" as Nash waved his arms to encourage them to get louder. Then the football players, holding a sign that said "Thank you, Nash! Our MVP," presented him with a gift-wrapped box.

Read more [here](#). Shared by John Lumpkin.

-0-

On The Record with Will Lewis (Semafor)

Semafor Business' signature interview series, On The Record, brings you conversations with the people running, shaping, and changing our economy. Read Liz Hoffman's earlier conversations with Mattel CEO Ynon Kreiz on Hollywood's golden age of IP, Citizens Bank CEO Bruce Van Saun on the challenges for midsized banks, and Delta CEO Ed Bastian on the 2020 airlines bailout.

On Sir Will Lewis' 17th day as CEO of the Washington Post, Washington media celebrated him in its particularly small-town way: everyone who was anyone packed into the same room at the stately home of his interim predecessor Patty Stonesifer and her husband, the journalist Michael Kinsley.

Lewis, 54, a relentlessly charming Brit whose uniform is sleek sweaters and expensive-looking sneakers, led Dow Jones from 2014 to 2020. He marks a break from the past mold of Post leaders, formally clad titans of D.C. society. And he arrived at an unsettled time for a paper Jeff Bezos rescued in 2013. The Post became a booming hub of Washington's Trump crisis, before stalling out in the Biden years as the urgency of its core political coverage receded. Last year, the company reportedly lost about \$100 million and eliminated 240 of 2,500 jobs.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Linda Deutsch.

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Panel of experts suggest legislative measures to reverse journalism decline (Capitol News Illinois)

By ALEX ABBEDUTO
Capitol News Illinois

A bipartisan task force of legislators and journalism industry leaders has filed a report to the General Assembly detailing the decline of local journalism in Illinois and exploring ways the legislature can help revive it.

The Local Journalism Task Force, created in January 2022, found that about one-third of Illinois counties have either no source of local news or a single source, citing research by the Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism.

Sen. Steve Stadelman, D-Rockford, said he plans to introduce a bill this session including some of the task force's suggestions.

The policies recommended by the task force are a mix of strategies intended to increase funding, mitigate high operational costs and keep newsrooms local. Many of the recommendations have been implemented or introduced in other states.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Don Cooper.

The Final Word

The words and life of Martin Fennelly were a gift to all in Tampa Bay (tampabay.com)

By John Romano

TAMPA — He only just passed, and yet his eulogy is decades old.

It's in the words he wrote, the laughter he created, the life he lived.

Martin Fennelly died of a heart attack on Friday at age 65, but that's just the final paragraph of a much longer story. A story brilliantly told day after day by Martin himself as a columnist on the pages of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, Tampa Tribune and Tampa Bay Times.

It's the story of people and ballgames and life. The things he cared about and the things he wanted to say. And if you read closely enough about the baseball players or bobsledders, you could see the laughter, genius and compassion that he inevitably carried with him throughout this world.

"He knew sports, but he wasn't really into the X's and O's," said Gainesville Sun columnist David Whitley, who worked alongside Fennelly at the Tribune. "He was great at bringing out the human element of games and the people who played them. He was also as hilarious and creative as any writer you would ever meet. If you saw a column written by Martin Fennelly, you knew it was going to be worth reading."

He was smarter than me, and he was funnier than you. And, yet, he was completely egoless in an industry where humility is an endangered concept.

Read more [here](#). Shared by John Romano.

Today in History: Jan. 30, 2024



Today is Tuesday, Jan. 30, the 30th day of 2024. There are 336 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On Jan. 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany.

On this date:

In 1649, England's King Charles I was executed for high treason.

In 1911, James White, an intellectually disabled young Black man who had been convicted of rape for having sex with a 14-year-old white girl when he was 16, was publicly hanged in Bell County, Kentucky.

In 1945, during World War II, a Soviet submarine torpedoed the German ship MV Wilhelm Gustloff in the Baltic Sea, killing 9,000, most of them war refugees; roughly 1,000 people survived.

In 1948, Indian political and spiritual leader Mohandas K. Gandhi, 78, was shot and killed in New Delhi by Nathuram Godse (neh-too-RAHM' gahd-SAY'), a Hindu extremist.

In 1968, the Tet Offensive began during the Vietnam War as Communist forces launched surprise attacks against South Vietnamese towns and cities.

In 1969, The Beatles staged an impromptu concert atop Apple headquarters in London that would be their last public performance.

In 1972, 13 Roman Catholic civil rights marchers were shot and killed by British soldiers in Northern Ireland on what became known as "Bloody Sunday."

In 1993, Los Angeles inaugurated its Metro Red Line, the city's first modern subway.

In 2005, Iraqis voted in their country's first free election in a half-century; President George W. Bush called the balloting a resounding success.

In 2006, Coretta Scott King, widow of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., died in Rosarito Beach, Mexico, at age 78.

In 2017, President Donald Trump fired Acting U.S. Attorney General Sally Yates after she publicly questioned the constitutionality of his controversial refugee and immigration ban and refused to defend it in court.

In 2020, health officials reported the first known case in which the new coronavirus was spread from one person to another in the United States.

Today's birthdays: Actor Gene Hackman is 94. Actor Vanessa Redgrave is 87. Country singer Jeanne Pruett is 87. Country singer Norma Jean is 86. Horn player William King of The Commodores is 75. Musician Phil Collins is 73. Actor Charles S. Dutton ("Roc") is 73. Actor Ann Dowd ("The Handmaid's Tale") is 68. Comedian Brett Butler ("Anger Management," "Grace Under Fire") is 66. Singer Jody Watley is 65. Actor Wayne Wilderson ("Veep") is 58. Country singer Tammy Cochran is 52. Actor Christian Bale is 50. Guitarist Carl Broemel of My Morning Jacket is 50. Actor Olivia Colman is 50. Singer Josh Kelley is 44. Actor Wilmer Valderrama ("That '70s Show") is 44. Actor Mary Hollis Inboden ("The Real O'Neals") is 38. Actor Kylie Bunbury ("Big Sky," "Pitch") is 35. Actor Jake Thomas ("Lizzie McGuire," "AI") is 34. Actor Danielle Campbell ("Tell Me A Story," "The Originals") 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.

Paul Stevens

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