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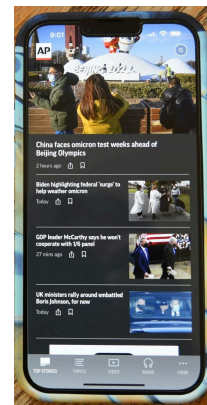
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Connecting

Feb. 6, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this Feb. 6, 2024,

Our colleague **Norm Abelson** looks back on "an old Dutchman who loved me," his grandfather, in a fond remembrance to lead today's issue.

We also remember the life of **Larry Tuohy**, who worked in the AP's Washington bureau in the mid to late 1970s and into the early 80s. Larry died Feb. 2 at the age of 75. It was written by his partner of 41 years, our colleague [Janet McConnaughey](#).

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

Paul

Remembering an old friend



Young Norm being read the Sunday comics by great grandfather.

Norm Abelson - Though Isaac Peekel died 85 years ago, the few years we shared remain bright in my memory.

I was born into an immigrant family brought to near poverty by the Great Depression. As a result, at times as many as nine family members were crowded together, sharing expenses, in our six-room Boston suburb flat. But despite the difficulties, the impact of sharing their daily lives and hearing their endless stories, I know now, has enriched my life through all the intervening years. (I wouldn't be surprised if listening to all those stories led to most of my writing being in the form of memoir.)

Chief among the housemates was my great-grandfather, Isaac Peekel, born in the Netherlands in 1852. During the early years of my life, until his death, Grandpa and I grew to become close buddies. It might be said he was my first best friend. Always calling me "Sohn," he delighted in telling me tales from his life in Holland, and his many years as a premier cigar-maker.

Often these tales were told away from the crowd, as Grandpa Peekel and I sat alone together on the front porch bench. I've come to realize it wasn't only the stories that have stayed with me; it was also the presence of this beloved old man, the feeling of warmth from him, the smell of his pipe tobacco, the sound of his laughter. Comrades, a duo, sharing life.

I recall some little things. He was an avid penny-ante poker player, given to shouting "Gott ver damme," when the winning cards didn't come – but always with a smile. He snacked afternoons on his unusual and absolute favorite – a bowl of steaming boiled potatoes swimming in butter. When night came, a corner of the dining room became his bedroom, where Grandpa stretched out on a timeworn sofa.

Among the many things we shared, the oldest and youngest family members, was a passion for cowboy movies. When his \$30 a month Dutch pension arrived, most of it went toward house-hold expenses. The rest was for his personal needs, including our movie adventures. How I looked forward to our weekly mile-long walk to the Western-specializing Orpheum Theater, his cane in one hand, the other clasped with mine. When we came to busy Main Street, the traffic cop would halt all cars, and give Grandpa a smart salute as we crossed. It might have been the first time I ever felt important.

At the movie house, Grandpa would reach into his worn brown change purse, and with a few kind words to the woman in the glass enclosure, purchase two tickets. Next he handed me a nickel for candy. (That was no small thing; for just five cents you could get Mr. Goodbar, a huge chunk of chocolate studded with peanuts.)

Once inside, we two friends, sometimes our hands touching on the chair arm, waited for the picture. When it came on, woe to the kids who were talking or otherwise misbehaving. First came a warning to be quiet. If the noise continued, out went Grandpa's cane, gently but with certainty making contact with the offender's shoulder.

I have only one photo of Grandpa Peekel; it shows the two of us seated side-by-side, him reading me the Sunday funnies, a weekly ritual. My final memory is of his coffin being carried down our front steps. Deemed too young to attend the funeral, I stared out the window, surely with my tears flowing, as a black hearse drove slowly down the street until it was out of sight.

The hardscrabble life I shared in that home crowded with family, seems now to have been a blessing in disguise. Thanks in large part to an old Dutchman who loved me.

Larry Tuohy, Vietnam veteran and former Washington AP staffer, dies at 75



Larry Tuohy photographs an alligator on May 21, 2021, at the Barataria Unit of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve.

Larry Tuohy (Thomas Lawrence Tuohy II), whose scorn of euphemism often got him in trouble, is dead. Larry -- nicknamed the Brass Fish (he was never sure why) -- died Feb. 2, 2024. He was 75.

Larry was one of the world's great storytellers. But dementia robbed him first of occasional words, then of stories, and finally of nearly all his words.

One story he kept almost until the end and loved to tell doctors was about being hit by a land mine. (He often left out the fact that he and others were working to locate mines around his base in Vietnam so it could expand.) Someone squatted next to Larry and said, "This man is dead."

Larry said, "The hell I am!"

Larry was born Dec. 13, 1948, to John and Ellen Bell Tuohy, who predeceased him. He is survived by Janet McConaughy, his partner for 41 years; his sister, Marion Wolfe (Vince); brothers John (Mary), Justin and Albert; nephew John (Kaye Stoopman) and niece Katherine Tuohy, their children, nieces Laura and Jessica Wolfe, and many cousins.

The Tuohys moved from Arkansas to New York, then to Bethesda, Md., where Larry grew up next door to his Uncle Les Bell, his Aunt Cay and their nine children.

He was passionate about military history and painted multitudinous armies of miniature figures for tabletop war games, despite a tendency toward unfavorable die rolls. He also loved alligators and a succession of cats.

Larry left college after his freshman year and was drafted. He reenlisted twice ("The Army was the only place where I felt myself") and served three tours in Vietnam, including one after recovery from losing half his colon and bits of his small intestine to the mine.

Back in Maryland, he worked for a detective agency which, among other things, tested store security. Larry said he once left a hardware store with a coworker and enough legally stolen goods to stuff his VW Beetle, with lawnmower handles sticking out of a window.

He moved from that job to the Washington Bureau of The Associated Press, where he started as a copyboy and soon was promoted to administrative assistant for the Chief of Communications.

That also was where he and Janet became friendly acquaintances. They remained so until Janet, then in New Orleans, offered him her sofa for Mardi Gras 1983.

Larry had returned to school and graduated from the University of Maryland in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in history, concentrating on military history. His favorite professor encouraged him to get a doctorate and become a professor; Larry said the biggest mistake of his life was not doing so.

He moved to New Orleans about two years later. His jobs there ranged from editor at an archaeological research firm to information technology at the Tulane University School of Business and then at Gulf Coast Bank & Trust Co.

He also spent 13 years volunteering at the Barataria Unit of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. He was their alligator expert. One of his proudest possessions was a presidential medal for 700 volunteer hours in one year.

Services are pending. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the Barataria Unit.

A look back at a pre-Super Bowl moment

Bruce Lowitt - As Super Bowl LVIII approaches, I am reminded of a day leading up to Super Bowl IX in New Orleans, the fourth of 15 I covered for The AP (plus five for The St. Petersburg Times).

While gathering material for a takeout on the atmosphere enveloping The Big Easy, I encountered a rather stunning woman in the crowd on Bourbon Street or one of the other streets in the French Quarter.

She was walking toward me wearing two dinner plate-size pins on her chest, a purple one supporting the Minnesota Vikings, a yellow one for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Here was a moment worth putting in my story.

"Can't make up your mind?" I asked, opening the conversation.

"What, and chase off half my customers?" she replied, ending the conversation.

Beautiful!

It was the kicker to my takeout.

The desk cut it.

Aaargh!

Composed with tears. Larry's family and friends are welcome to share and forward this.

Rajkumar, Ohm to lead global investigations

In a memo to staff on Monday, Ron Nixon, vice president for news, investigative, enterprise, and grants and partnerships, announced that Mary Rajkumar and Jeannie Ohm will co-lead AP's award-winning investigative team and work across the organization to develop and produce in-depth investigative projects:

I can't think of two more accomplished journalists to lead the team. Both care deeply about the work and have helped to produce some of the AP's most ambitious journalism in recent years.

Mary Rajkumar has led two Pulitzer Gold Medal-winning international investigations for The Associated Press. Most recently, she led and edited *Erasing Mariupol*, a collaboration across the AP which won the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service and is credited with saving thousands of Ukrainian civilian lives. She also led and edited *Seafood From Slaves*, which won the 2016 Pulitzer Gold Medal and resulted in the rescue of more than 2,000 people trapped in modern-day slavery.

Three other projects she edited were named as Pulitzer finalists: on China for investigative reporting in 2021; on Al-Qaida for international in 2014, and on child trafficking in Africa in 2009. Stories she edited have also won two George Polk Awards and



10 Overseas Press Club awards, including six for best overall international work.

Rajkumar has worked at the AP since 2007, launching and editing enterprise and investigations worldwide. Before that, she served as deputy business editor for the Miami Herald, as assistant editor and deputy bureau chief at the San Jose Mercury News, and as a reporter at the Oakland Tribune. She graduated with honors from the University of Cambridge, U.K., and Stanford University, and is a native of Singapore.



Jeannie Ohm joined the AP in 2013, and since 2020 she has guided visual storytelling and analysis for the global investigations team. She has been committed to finding new ways to increase the visibility of AP's investigative journalism, including through visual investigations, podcasts and feature-length documentaries.

Jeannie led AP's collaboration with PBS Frontline and SITU Research on the award-winning documentary, "Crime Scene: Bucha," which was also nominated for a Peabody and Emmy award in two categories. She also oversaw the visual narrative reconstructing what happened to the Mariupol theater which was part of AP's 2023 Pulitzer.

In addition to long-term projects, she has also demonstrated the ability to be nimble and creative during breaking news and major events, such as the visual investigation of the Burkina Faso military killing of teenage boys and Hamas training videos before the Oct. 7 attack.

During the pandemic, Jeannie was part of a team recognized with a Gramling Award for helping staffers quickly transition to publishing video remotely. She previously worked as a video supervisor ensuring timeliness and accuracy in AP's daily video offerings to members.

Prior to joining AP, Jeannie was an on-air correspondent for MSNBC and NBC News and covered the White House and Pentagon. She won a News and Documentary Emmy with NBC News in 2009. She's a graduate of Middlebury College.

Click [here](#) for link to this story.

A solemn moment



US President Joe Biden, right, stands as an Army carry team moves the transfer case containing the remains of US Army Sgt. Kennedy Ladon Sanders, 24, of Waycross, Ga., at Dover Air Force Base, Del., Friday, Feb. 2, 2024. Sanders was killed in a drone attack in Jordan on Jan. 28. (AP/Matt Rourke)

Setting a 'new' record?

Grammy Awards Pop music CA State Wire GA State Wire

Taylor Swift wins album of the year at the Grammy Awards for the fourth time, setting a new record

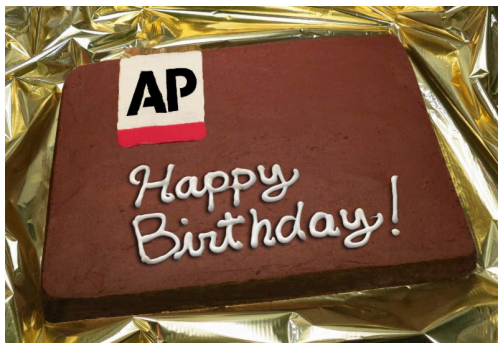
BY MARIA SHERMAN

15 mins ago

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Taylor Swift **won album of the year** at the Grammy Awards for “Midnights,” breaking the record for most wins in the category with four.

Mark Mittelstadt - Apparently in the age of unlimited Internet bytes there's no need to avoid excessive words.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Burt Herman](#)

[Maye-e Wong](#)

Stories of interest

Microsoft, pushing generative AI in newsrooms, partners with Semafor, CUNY, the Online News Association, and others (Nieman Labs)

BY: LAURA HAZARD OWEN

Lovely to see Microsoft making new friends in journalism! The tech giant, which has invested \$13 billion in OpenAI, is “launching several collaborations with news organizations to adopt generative AI,” it announced Monday. Those partnerships:

Semafor will work with us to harness AI tools to assist journalists in their research, source discovery, translation, and more with Semafor Signals, helping journalists provide a diverse array of credible local, national, and global sources to their audience.

The Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY will invite experienced journalists to a tuition-free program to explore ways to incorporate generative AI into their work and newsrooms in a three-month hybrid and highly interactive program. The AI Journalism Lab will be run by Nikita Roy, a data scientist, entrepreneur, and host of the podcast Newsroom Robots, which explores AI applications in journalism.

Read more [here](#).

-0-

Florida bill could lower the bar for defamation lawsuits against media organizations (Independent Florida Alligator)

By Rylan DiGiacomo-Rapp

Florida media organizations could potentially face increased legal pushback under a recently proposed bill allowing public figures to more easily sue for defamation.

House Bill 757 titled "Defamation, False Light, and Unauthorized Publication of Name or Likeness" seeks to lower the bar for public figures filing these lawsuits. Proposed by Rep. Alex Andrade, R-Pensacola, the initiative would widen the scope of actual malice, work to discredit anonymous sources, limit the use of artificial intelligence, establish 60-day veracity hearings and authorize venue expansion.

Andrade presented the bill to the House Civil Justice Subcommittee Jan. 18, arguing HB 757 would act as a necessary protection for public figures.

"Media is not engaging in sufficient self-regulation," Andrade said in the meeting. "By expecting people to act in good faith, they're allowed to get it wrong, but what they're not allowed to do is act so recklessly that they publish something that could harm someone's reputation without doing bare minimum utility."

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

-0-

Dearborn mayor calls for increased police in response to Wall Street Journal opinion piece (Free Press)

Amelia Benavides-Colón

An increased number of police patrols began monitoring the streets of Dearborn on Saturday after an opinion article posted by the Wall Street Journal dubbed the city "America's Jihad Capital."

Mayor Abdullah Hammoud said Dearborn police would ramp up their presence in places of worship and major infrastructure points in response to swarms of online hate targeting Dearborn.

"This is more than irresponsible journalism. Publishing such inflammatory writing puts Dearborn residents at increased risk for harm," Hammoud told the Free Press on Saturday evening.

Hammoud, the city's first Muslim and Arab American mayor, alerted the community to the inflammatory article Saturday afternoon via social media.

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

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The Messenger's Brutal Demise Didn't Have To Be This Cruel (Politico Magazine)

By JACK SHAFER

Jimmy Finkelstein hastily built a rocket ship he named The Messenger, boarded a staff of 300 promising the moon, lit the fuse and then slunk away when it didn't even reach orbit. The wreckage is considerable. Finkelstein and team, which had recruited experienced journalists from jobs at POLITICO, the New York Post, the Los Angeles Times, NBC News, Reuters and elsewhere, made no effort to rescue or aid the crew. No severance offered after their short-notice layoffs. No last rites. The only trace of the site that remains is a dead page reading "TheMessenger." and an email address. Reporters learned they were being thrown into unemployment by reading the New York Times rather than a note from management.

Finkelstein is being drawn as a villain in the disaster. Former staffers have already shaken off the reentry dust and filed a class action suit against the busted publication for failing to provide notice of dismissal. Critics like S. Mitra Kalita of URL media have succinctly accused Finkelstein of erecting The Messenger on the "expertise of an internet that no longer exists," as she told the New York Times, adding, "Facebook was not going to surface its links no matter how clickable those headlines were."

Read more [here](#).

Today in History: Feb. 6, 2024



Today is Tuesday, Feb. 6, the 37th day of 2024. There are 329 days left in the year.

Today's highlight

On Feb. 6, 1952, Britain's King George VI, 56, died at Sandringham House in Norfolk, England; he was succeeded as monarch by his 25-year-old elder daughter, who became Queen Elizabeth II.

On this date

In 1778, during the American Revolutionary War, the United States won official recognition and military support from France with the signing of a Treaty of Alliance in Paris.

In 1788, Massachusetts became the sixth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1815, the state of New Jersey issued the first American railroad charter to John Stevens, who proposed a rail link between Trenton and New Brunswick. (The line, however, was never built.)

In 1862, during the Civil War, Fort Henry in Tennessee fell to Union forces.

In 1899, a peace treaty between the United States and Spain was ratified by the U.S. Senate.

In 1911, Ronald Wilson Reagan, the 40th president of the United States, was born in Tampico, Illinois.

In 1922, Cardinal Archille Ratti was elected pope; he took the name Pius XI.

In 1933, the 20th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the so-called "lame duck" amendment, was proclaimed in effect by Secretary of State Henry Stimson.

In 1993, tennis Hall of Famer and human rights advocate Arthur Ashe died in New York at age 49.

In 1998, Carl Wilson, a founding member of The Beach Boys, died in Los Angeles at age 51.

In 2000, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton launched her successful candidacy for the U.S. Senate.

In 2008, the Bush White House defended the use of the interrogation technique known as waterboarding, saying it was legal, not torture, and had saved American lives.

In 2013, toy maker Hasbro Inc. announced that Monopoly fans had voted online to add a cat token to the board game, replacing the iron.

In 2018, casino mogul Steve Wynn resigned as chairman and CEO of Wynn Resorts amid sexual misconduct allegations.

In 2021, George P. Shultz, who was President Ronald Reagan's secretary of state as part of a long career in public service, died at his California home; he was 100.

In 2022, Queen Elizabeth II celebrated the 70th anniversary of her ascendance to the British throne, an unprecedented reign that made her a symbol of stability in the United Kingdom.

In 2023, a powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Turkey and Syria, toppling thousands of buildings and trapping residents under mounds of rubble; the death toll would eventually be more than 50,000.

Today's birthdays: Actor Mamie Van Doren is 93. Actor Mike Farrell is 85. Former NBC News anchorman Tom Brokaw is 84. Singer Fabian is 81. Actor Michael Tucker is 79. Producer-director-writer Jim Sheridan is 75. Actor Jon Walmsley is 68. Actor Kathy Najimy is 67. Rock musician Simon Phillips (Toto) is 67. Actor-director Robert Townsend is 67. Actor Barry Miller is 66. Actor Megan Gallagher is 64. Rock singer Axl Rose (Guns N' Roses) is 62. Country singer Richie McDonald is 62. Singer Rick Astley is 58. Rock musician Tim Brown (Boo Radleys) is 55. Former ABC News anchor Amy Robach is 51. Actor Josh Stewart is 47. Actor Ben Lawson is 44. Actor Brandon Hammond is 40. Actor Crystal Reed (TV: "Teen Wolf") is 39. Actor Alice Greczyn is 38. Actor Anna Diop is 36. R&B singer/actor Tinashe is 31.

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!

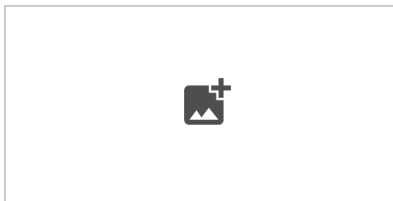
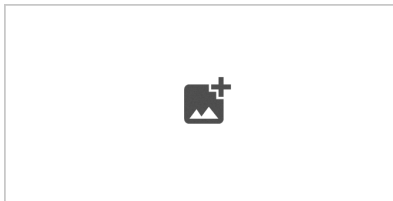
Here are some suggestions:

- **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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