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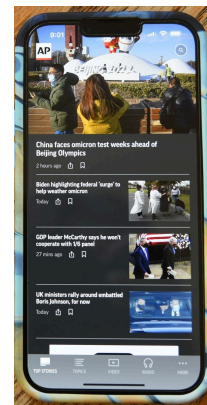
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# Connecting

Feb. 16, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this Feb. 16, 2024,

During this Valentine’s Day week, Connecting received some great stories from colleagues on their favorite memories of the holiday.

From our colleague **Sylvia Wingfield**: THANK YOU TO BETTY OSBORNE for sharing her wonderful Valentine’s Day 50th Anniversary memories of Burl. It is a lovely reminder that they really are a blessing! It was so nice to meet at our Dallas reunion last year. I appreciate having the 'World in 1973' — my first year at AP — from the archive selection she brought us all as keepsakes."

Poynter.org issued a similar invitation to its readers and I thought the story it shared would be of interest, The headline: “We asked for your newsroom love stories. You didn’t disappoint. Breaking news: Journalists, love to fall in love with each other.”

Click [here](#) for the story by **Annie Aguiar** that led:

*Deadlines, election nights, and ... romance?*

*Working in journalism means running into a fair amount of newsie couples. Earlier this month, we asked our audience for their newsroom love stories, and you didn't disappoint.*

*We received plenty of responses from newshound lovebirds: rival television station reporters seeing each other across the room, college newspaper sweethearts, reporters co-bylining stories long before co-bylining marriage certificates. For a Valentine's Day special, we invited a few journalist couples who responded to our post to share their stories in more detail.*

If the story sparks a similar story you'd like to share, well, it's never too late for love.

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

Paul

## Sharing news of a longtime journalist friend

Our colleague [Dodi Fromson](#) shares news of the death of a longtime friend of her and her late husband Murray – journalist Norman Sklarewitz, who died last Saturday at the age of 100.

“Norm was Murray's friend from the '50s in Tokyo. I met him here in LA after we married in '61, and saw them from time to time. Norm was old-school journalism, worked hard, wasn't looking for the freebies like some who freelanced as he did. I shall surely miss my visits with him!”

### Norman Sklarewitz Obituary

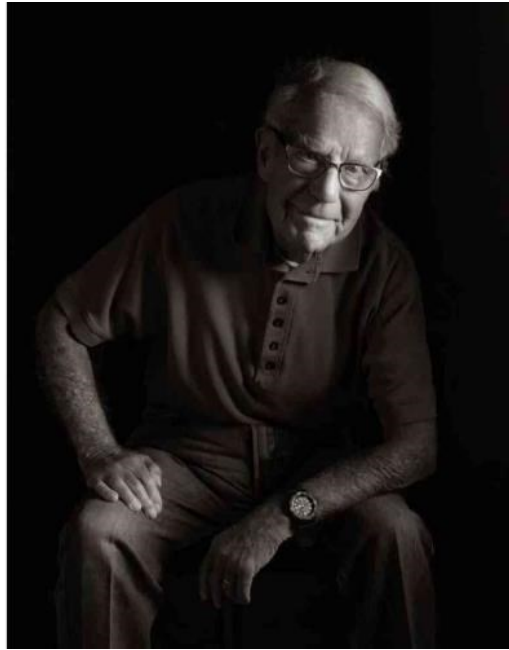
Veteran journalist Norman Sklarewitz, who traveled the globe for decades introducing readers with features on exotic and distinctive locations and who had previously reported hard news from a number of international datelines, passed away Saturday at the 100. He had just celebrated the milestone a week ago.

In some point in their careers, many journalists sought to strike out and freelance as a means of earning a living. However, few if any, were as successful in this effort as Norm was.

After years working as a staffer for such prestigious publications as The Wall Street Journal and U.S. News & World Report, he turned to freelance. To do this he would identify likely magazines and newspapers as markets and contribute, mainly feature articles, to them. Before he retired, reflecting his boundless energy and enthusiasm for the work he loved, he wrote and published an astounding thousands of stories.

To get to that level of productivity, Norm spent a lifetime sharpening his reporting and writing skills. It began literally while a teenager in high school in Whiting, Indiana. For \$5 a week, he would phone in local high school sports scores to the Chicago Tribune desk. Reflecting an almost innate ability to spot story potential in everyday activities, while still in high school, he sold an idea to LIFE Magazine that was published as a three page spread.

Read more [here](#).



## Mock trial teammates are daughters of former AP newswomen



Nerinx Hall senior Aylo Niemeyer stands to make an objection during a mock trial competition at the St. Louis County Courthouse in Clayton, Mo. on Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2024. Nerinx Hall, a suburban St. Louis high school, is thus far undefeated during their mock trial season. Aylo's mock trial teammate is senior Ava Carson, pictured to the left. Their mothers, Kelly Wiese Niemeyer and Betsy Taylor Carson, were AP Missouri colleagues in the Jefferson City and St. Louis bureaus in the 2000s. Photo by David Carson.

# Grover Is Now a Reporter. Journalists Aren't Optimistic.



Grover on the set of "Sesame Street" in New York. Photo by Richard Drew/Associated Press

By Yan Zhuang

Grover, the furry blue Muppet from "Sesame Street," is known for working lots of jobs over the years, including astronaut and dentist. Now he is apparently a journalist.

"As a news reporter, I always do my research before I break a story," he wrote Monday on X. "I am confident to report that you are so special and amazing!"

Some fellow journalists welcomed him into the profession, albeit with some ribbing about the reliability of his reporting and his professionalism. "Who are your sources," wrote Danielle Kurtzleben, a reporter with National Public Radio, which published a separate news story about Grover's foray into journalism.

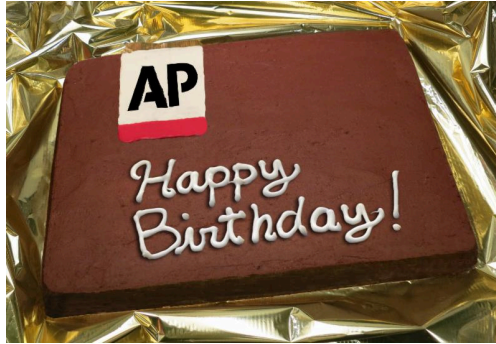
Others predicted that his career would be short given the dire state of the news industry, which has been hit with unrelenting rounds of layoffs and closures in recent months while also struggling with reader fatigue.

"I regret to report a hedge fund has since purchased Grover's paper and laid him off," wrote S.P. Sullivan, a reporter with NJ.com.

“Unfortunately, Grover was fired for not hitting his three story a day quota,” said Scott Nover, a contributing writer for Slate.

Read more [here](#).

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



*On Saturday to...*

[Martha Irvine](#)

*On Sunday to...*

[Peggy Andersen](#)

[Paul Caluori](#)

[Dick Carelli](#)

[Jurate Kazickas](#)

[Michael Rubin](#)

## Stories of interest

***Journalist casualties in the Israel-Gaza war*** (Committee to Protect Journalists)

*Editor's notes: The list below is CPJ's most recent and preliminary account of journalist deaths in the war. Our database will not include all of these casualties until we have*

*completed further investigations into the circumstances surrounding them. For more information, read our [FAQ](#).*

The Israel-Gaza war has taken a severe toll on journalists since Hamas launched its unprecedented attack against Israel on October 7 and Israel declared war on the militant Palestinian group, launching strikes on the blockaded Gaza Strip.

CPJ is investigating all reports of journalists and media workers killed, injured, or missing in the war, which has led to the deadliest period for journalists since CPJ began gathering data in 1992.

As of February 16, 2024, CPJ's preliminary investigations showed at least 88 journalists and media workers were among the more than 29,000 killed since the war began on October 7—with more than 28,000 Palestinian deaths in Gaza and the West Bank and 1,200 deaths in Israel.

Read more [here](#).

And this from our colleague Dan Perry:

## ***The Truth about the Gaza report from the Committee to Protect Journalists***

The Committee to Protect Journalists just issued a damning report showing that a huge amount of journalists were killed in the Gaza war in 2023: 72, which is three-quarters of the total number of journalists killed around the world, and the most ever recorded by the organization from any one place in any given year. It's bad, and I urge Israel to take it seriously, investigate each case, and project urgency.

But it is also extremely misleading to present the report as evidence of systematic or even frequent targeting of journalists. While rogue actions are possible, and I think are sometimes taken too lightly, Israel does not target journalists in the way that lawless countries do, with arrests and assassinations and intimidation and control. Certainly not in Israel proper (which is a remarkably freewheeling democracy despite everything), and also not in the occupied territories (it simply oppresses the journalists no less than anyone else there, unwise though that may be).

Read more [here](#).

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## ***No more downsizing? Gannett is hiring locally at all levels.*** (Editor and Publisher)

**Episode 224 of "E&P Reports" - A Vodcast series hosted by Mike Blinder  
March 2023 E&P feature on newsroom downsizing**

As reported by E&P in May of 2023 (“Ghost papers: Journalists find themselves alone or with just a few left in the newsroom”), UNC’s Hussman School of Journalism and Media’s Knight Chair in Journalism and Digital Media Economics, Penelope Muse Abernathy stated, “Although the exact number is hard to pin down, we estimate, based on news accounts and industry data, at least 1,000 of the 7,200 newspapers still published in this country — and perhaps as many as 1,500 — have lost significantly more than half of their newsroom staff since 2004. As a result, they have become ‘ghost newspapers’ with drastically curtailed reach and journalistic missions.”

However, recently, Gannett (NYSE: GCI), the United States’ largest media company, seems to be changing the trend with hundreds of recent hires announced and numerous openings advertised in many of their markets from coast to coast.

Gannett reports that in the past few months, they have created and filled 24 general manager roles, which includes a stated function to “work closely with their respective executive editors to strengthen local connections with businesses and brands to drive community-based strategies and engagement.”

Read more [here](#).

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## ***CNN Looks to Slash Budgets, Star Salaries as Mark Thompson Digs In*** (Editor and Publisher)

**Emily Smith**

CNN boss Mark Thompson is looking to fund his digital-first transformation by cutting anchor salaries — currently more than \$50 million — as he seeks to remake the ailing cable network into a U.S. version of the BBC, media observers and former CNN executives have told TheWrap.

Thompson, the former head of the BBC and The New York Times, has said he wants to unleash a “revolution” at the 43-year-old news network, and will not spare the network’s formidable talent roster.

Top CNN earners include prime-time anchor Anderson Cooper, who makes an estimated \$20 million a year; Wolf Blitzer, who earns about \$15 million; Jake Tapper, who pulls in more than \$8.5 million; and Chris Wallace, who makes about \$8 million, two insiders said. Other co-anchors, including John Berman, Kate Bolduan and Sara Sidner, make in the \$1 million to \$2 million range, a third executive with knowledge of salaries told TheWrap.

Thompson has indicated in a staff memo he is looking to trim production costs “that now look difficult to support,” which media experts and former staffers say is likely to mean cuts to at least some of those big salaries. But contracts for some of the biggest stars, including Cooper and Tapper, are not due to expire until after the presidential election — at the end of 2025 or 2026, according to two people familiar with the situation.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Radio host killed in Kansas City mass shooting*** (Inside Radio)

The mass shooting that turned Kansas City's Super Bowl celebration into a tragedy Wednesday has taken the life of a local radio host. Mid-Coast Radio Project says adult alternative "Free Range Radio" KKFI (90.1) personality Lisa Lopez-Galvan was the killed when the gunman opened fire. Lopez-Galvan's son and two cousins were also reportedly injured in the shooting.

Lopez-Galvan was host of the "Taste of Tejano" program on the station since March 2022. KKFI made the announced in a Facebook post. "Our hearts and prayers are with her family," it says, urging Kansas City residents who saw something during the shooting to call law enforcement. Lopez-Galvan was also a branch manager at a local employment agency according to her LinkedIn profile.

Details about the mass shooting are still developing. Police in Kansas City says at least 23 people were shot after the rally honoring the Chiefs' Super Bowl victory ended. At least two people are said to be in critical condition. Among those shot were 11 children.

Three people have been detained by police, but their possible role in the shooting has not yet been disclosed by law enforcement agencies investigating the incident. Kansas City Police Chief Stacey Graves said during a late day press conference that at least one weapon had been recovered.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Peg Coughlin.

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## ***How ESPN, Kansas City reporters reacted to the Chiefs parade shooting*** (Washington Post)

**By Des Bieler and Cindy Boren**

When ESPN's "NFL Live" aired Wednesday afternoon in its usual time slot, its expert panelists were suddenly tasked with pivoting from the Kansas City Chiefs, who were celebrating a Super Bowl win, to a shooting that unfolded at the team's victory parade.

Host Laura Rutledge and several analysts expressed dismay at another episode of gun-related violence and suggested in various ways that something needed to change on a societal level.



“These images are happening everywhere — all the time, every day, every week — in this country,” said Adam Schefter, ESPN’s top NFL news-breaker whose X account reaches 10.7 million followers.

“It’s disgusting. It’s sickening. It’s enough,” he continued. “How many times do we have to see this everywhere?”

Schefter reported that, per a source with the Chiefs, everyone directly associated with the team came away from the shooting unharmed. He noted that at the time “eight to 10” other people were injured, including one dead.

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

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## ***George Soros fund poised to take control of nation’s second-largest chain of radio stations: ‘This is scary’***

(New York Post)

**By Josh Kosman and Ariel Zilber**

George Soros is poised to take a massive stake in the nation’s second-largest radio company, which owns more than 220 stations nationwide, according to court filings and sources close to the situation.

The left-leaning billionaire’s Soros Fund Management has bought up \$400 million of debt in Audacy — the No. 2 US radio broadcaster behind iHeartMedia with stations including New York’s WFAN and 1010 WINS, as well as Los Angeles-based KROQ, according to bankruptcy filings.

One insider close to the situation, noting that he was a Republican, said he believed it was possible Soros was buying the stake to exert influence on public opinion in the months leading up to the 2024 presidential election.

“This is scary,” the source said.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Mark Mittelstadt.

## **The Final Word**



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Pawfirm Owner

**Did your human  
break a treat in half  
and try to pass it off  
as a whole treat?**

**You may be entitled  
to compensation.**

**Our attorneys have seven times  
the experience chasing down  
treats owed.  
Paw us today to schedule a  
consultation**

**HOUND,  
WOLFE  
& CHASE**

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Shared by Ollie Stevens

## Today in History: Feb. 16, 2024



Today is Friday, Feb. 16, the 47th day of 2024. There are 319 days left in the year.

## Today's highlight

**On Feb. 16, 1959, Fidel Castro became premier of Cuba a month and a-half after the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista.**

## On this date

In 1862, the Civil War Battle of Fort Donelson in Tennessee ended as some 12,000 Confederate soldiers surrendered; Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's victory earned him the moniker "Unconditional Surrender Grant."

In 1918, Lithuania proclaimed its independence from the Russian Empire. (Lithuania, which was occupied by the Soviet Union, then Nazi Germany, then the Soviet Union again during World War II, renewed its independence in 1990).

In 1923, the burial chamber of King Tutankhamen's recently unearthed tomb was unsealed in Egypt by English archaeologist Howard Carter.

In 1945, American troops landed on the island of Corregidor in the Philippines during World War II.

In 1960, the nuclear-powered radar picket submarine USS Triton departed New London, Connecticut, on the first submerged circumnavigation by a vessel.

In 1961, the United States launched the Explorer 9 satellite.

In 1996, eleven people were killed in a fiery collision between an Amtrak passenger train and a Maryland commuter train in Silver Spring, Maryland.

In 1998, a China Airlines Airbus A300 trying to land in fog near Taipei, Taiwan, crashed, killing all 196 people on board, plus seven on the ground.

In 2001, the United States and Britain staged air strikes against radar stations and air defense command centers in Iraq.

In 2009, in Stamford, Connecticut, a 200-pound chimpanzee named Travis went berserk, severely mauling its owner's friend, Charla Nash; Travis was shot dead by police.

In 2011, bookstore chain Borders filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and said it would close nearly a third of its stores. (Borders closed all of its remaining stores in September 2011.)

In 2012, New York Times correspondent and former Associated Press reporter Anthony Shadid, a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, died of an apparent asthma attack in Syria while reporting on the uprising against its president; he was 43.

In 2017, in the first full-length news conference of his presidency, Donald Trump denounced what he called the "criminal" leaks that took down his top national security adviser, Michael Flynn.

In 2018, in an indictment, special counsel Robert Mueller accused 13 Russians of an elaborate plot to disrupt the 2016 U.S. presidential election with a huge but hidden social media trolling campaign aimed in part at helping Donald Trump.

In 2023, Tim McCarver, the All-Star catcher and Hall of Fame broadcaster who during 60 years in baseball won two World Series titles with the St. Louis Cardinals, died at age 81.

Today's birthdays: Jazz/pop singer-actor Peggy King is 94. Actor William Katt is 73. Actor LeVar Burton is 67. Actor-rapper Ice-T is 66. International Tennis Hall of Famer John McEnroe is 65. Rock musician Andy Taylor is 63. Rock musician Dave Lombardo (Slayer) is 59. Actor Sarah Clarke is 53. Olympic gold medal runner Cathy Freeman is 51. Actor Mahershala Ali is 50. Rapper Lupe Fiasco is 42. Actor Chloe Wepper is 38. Pop-rock singer Ryan Follese (Hot Chelle Rae) is 37. Sen. John Ossoff, D-Ga., is 37. Rock musician Danielle Haim is 35. Actor Elizabeth Olsen is 35.

## 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.



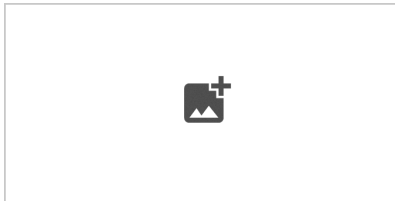
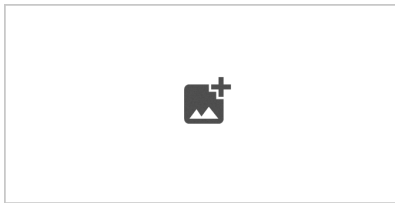
Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

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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