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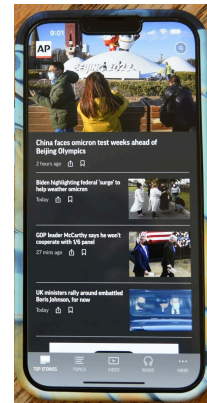
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Connecting

Feb. 20, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this Feb. 20, 2024,

Ever been called for jury duty?

Our colleague **Steve Paulson** did, just recently in Colorado, and in our lead story, he shares what happened – including the surprise of seeing a fellow AP journalist in an instructional video at the outset.

Connecting would welcome your own story of jury service. At one point, stating that you are a journalist was enough to disqualify you from a jury pool – but it is my understanding that this is no longer the case. Steve covers that in his post.

I got sad news on the personal front with word that **Becky Barber**, editor of the Grants (NM) Daily Beacon when I first met her as the new Albuquerque bureau chief in 1979, died at the age of 73. She was a favorite of those of us in the Albuquerque bureau back then. A great supporter of the AP and its mission.

Our colleague **Jim McElroy** wrote: “She was a very nice person who was always cheerful and enjoyable to be around. I always looked forward to seeing her when she came to Albuquerque for AP functions. She worked hard as editor of the family’s Grants Daily Beacon, and I believe made a difference in that community during her time there.”

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

Paul

George Garties and Jury Duty

Steve Paulson - I had the privilege of being summoned to jury duty recently in Jefferson County, Colorado. Before they began giving us instructions, court officials asked us to watch a video. Imagine my surprise when I saw former Denver Bureau Chief George Garties interviewed on his experience as a juror that was taped more than a decade ago. He did a great job explaining his experience and duties of a juror. The video is available on the [court website](#).

I had my qualms about possibly being picked for a jury. I think so-called mainstream journalists make some of the best possible jurors because we are taught to tell both sides of a story and have a healthy distrust of authority. I treasure a letter I got from Timothy McVeigh’s attorney, Stephen Jones, thanking me and the late AP photographer Ed Andrieski for being “old school” journalists who kept open minds. Old school suits me just fine.

However, I think journalists, like judges and attorneys picked for juries, can be problematic. During jury questioning and instructions to jurors before they begin deliberations, jurors are usually told to consider the evidence, and only the evidence. However, journalists are trained to go beyond the evidence. We not only look at the evidence presented, we also look at the judge to see if he or she is rolling their eyes, or, in the case of McVeigh Judge Richard Match, if his mustache started to twitch when an attorney crossed the line. We also look at jurors to see if they are on the edge of their seats, bored, or wiping away tears. We look at the audience to see if their Bull meters are going off. We also look for the evidence that was not presented and wonder why.

I was not picked as a finalist for juror questioning, but had I been picked, I had decided to ask for a private meeting with the judge and attorneys to discuss my qualms without tainting the others in the jury pool. I also wanted to let the judge and attorneys know I was still capable of carrying out the oath of a juror.

I know there are other AP staffers who have had similar experiences, and some staffers with much more experience, like AP Courts Special Correspondent **Linda Deutsch**, who probably deserves a juris doctor law degree for the time she spent in courtrooms. I would be interested in the experiences of others and how they handled these thorny issues.

Remembering John Hotard

Charles Hill - I was saddened to hear about the passing of John Hotard, but that got me thinking about him and then I couldn't help but smile.

That smile is because of who Hotard was and how he made people feel. By the way, many people at the Texas AP when we both worked there called him Hotard, not John, and somehow in his case doing that felt more like an affectionate nickname rather than just his last name.

Hotard was a real newsman – knowledgeable, skilled and professional -- and was serious when the job or the occasion demanded it. But almost always, you would find him (and you) smiling. He was fun to be around. He had an active sense of humor and was, by nature, a very upbeat and warm person, energetic and unfailingly authentic and trustworthy.

He was state editor when I arrived in Dallas as a newsman transferring from Washington. He was welcoming then and continued to be supportive as I became Houston correspondent and then returned to Dallas as assistant chief of bureau. Whatever our roles were, I always knew I could count on Hotard, and I'm sure I was not alone in that.

John Hotard truly made the AP better and also made the lives of the people he worked with better.

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Ken Herman - John was a wonderful and friendly colleague when I showed up at the Dallas Bureau in 1977 and tried to sort out how it all fit together. And I'll always remember his calm demeanor when breaking news seemed to be breaking out all over Texas. A true pro.

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Marc Wilson - I was deeply saddened by the news in Monday's Connecting that John Hotard had died.

John was state editor in Dallas when I became ACOB for Texas. He and I quickly became friends. We ate lunch together most days.

On Mondays he usually talked about his work at church. He loved to work with his hands and volunteered to re-roof the church. Then he re-tiled the church's floor. Then he sanded and re-stained the church's pews. Every Sunday he passed the collection plate. Anything the church needed, John handled.

One Monday at lunch he was depressed.

"What's up?" I asked.

"The church is mad at me."

"The church is mad at you? You've re-roofed the church. You put in a new floor for them. You refinished the pews. You pass the collection plate every week. You volunteer to do anything they need. How can they possibly be mad at you?"

"They're mad because I won't join the church."

"You're not a member of the church?"

"No. Susan is. But I'm not."

"Why won't you join the church?"

"I like the people and I love doing all the work, but I can't join because I don't agree with their dogma."

He made me laugh.

That was John Hotard.

He could be your friend even if he didn't agree with your dogma.

Our country needs more people who can be your friend without agreeing with your dogma.

Rest in peace, my friend John. Heaven has a new handyman.

RIP - Becky Barber, 1951 - 2024

Rebecca Gail Barber (Becky), age 73, passed away at Colonial Gardens memory care facility in Fort Worth, Texas, on February 15, 2024. She had been plagued with heart problems for over 30 years and finally her heart just got too tired to continue. Rebecca was born in Carlsbad, New Mexico, on March 26, 1951.

She is survived by her sister Sandra Hearnberger (spouse Ed, daughters Lisa and Leigh), brother Wayne Erwin (wife Jeanine, daughters Michelle, Kathy, Marie, and Samantha).

After graduating from high school and a short stint in college, she went to work at the family newspaper, the Grants Daily Beacon in Grants, New Mexico, one of the few female-operated & managed newspapers in the country at the time. She later became editor of the newspaper and they received numerous awards during her tenure, including multiple E H Shaffer journalism awards. Also, Rebecca was president of the New Mexico Associated Press Managing Editors in 1980-81.

She was instrumental in the group that worked on the formation of Cibola County in New Mexico. After a downturn in the Grants uranium economy, she headed to Annapolis, Maryland, and took a job first at the Annapolis Capital newspaper and then later moved to public relations for the Port of Baltimore. That was a job that she enjoyed very much and continued until her retirement

She married John Trefren in 2010, and later they moved to Las Cruces, New Mexico, to retire. Rebecca volunteered at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Museum there. She loved everything about living in New Mexico, particularly Las Cruces.

In 2020 she suffered a fall with a head injury in her apartment. After a few months she moved to an assisted living facility in Grapevine, Texas, to be near her sister.

Rebecca made friends easily and had many friends in Grants, Las Cruces, Baltimore, and Grapevine (she really enjoyed being the center of attention!).



Rebecca had a strong interest in music and loved singing. She and John enjoyed traveling, including a few trips to St. Lucia and a 1996 trip to visit her sister in Shanghai, China.

Her favorite pastimes included watching old reruns of The Andy Griffith Show and collecting buffalo figurines of all types.

There will be a memorial service at her Grapevine living facility at a later date.

According to her wish her cremains will be returned to New Mexico.

"Eye on Solidarity"

Sonya Zalubowski - Glad to see the success the AP documentary on Mariupol has achieved in showing the world the horrors Russia has inflicted on Ukraine. That horror continues today, the two-year mark of that terrible war fast approaching on Feb. 24.

The AP also published my book, "**Eye on Solidarity**" a year ago on that date, available on Amazon in both ebook and paperback. In my book, I deal extensively in a coda at the end with the long history between Poland and Ukraine and the progress of the conflict to that point.

Unfortunately, the war seems at a stalemate almost exactly as I chronicle in the coda. The good news is that the Polish government has changed to a more liberal ruling party under Donald Tusk and the same Polish support for Ukraine continues.

The good news is that the Polish government has changed to a more liberal ruling party under Donald Tusk and the same Polish support for Ukraine continues. I can only hope the United States will come forward with the much-needed munitions aid that

has been blocked by elements of the GOP in the House of Representatives at what could become an important turning point in whether Ukraine survives.

AP wins the best-documentary prize at the BAFTA awards for Ukraine film '20 Days in Mariupol'



BY JILL LAWLESS

LONDON (AP) — The Associated Press won the best documentary prize at the British Academy Film Awards for Ukraine war documentary “20 Days in Mariupol,” produced with PBS’ “Frontline.”

Filmmaker Mstyslav Chernov admitted the accolade made him feel conflicted.

“It’s a huge honor. It’s a huge responsibility,” the Ukrainian journalist said after winning the trophy Sunday at London’s Royal Festival Hall. “This is not about us. This is about Ukraine and about the people of Mariupol.”

Chernov and an AP team spent three weeks in the Ukrainian port city as it was besieged by Russian forces in early 2022, documenting at huge personal risk the devastating toll on civilian and capturing enduring images of the war.

Chernov arrived in Mariupol one hour before Russia began its bombardment, along with photographer Evgeniy Maloletka and field producer Vasilisa Stepanenko. The images and stories they captured — the death of a 4-year-old girl, freshly dug mass

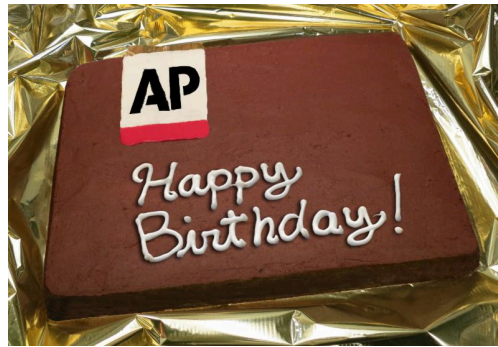
graves, the bombing of a maternity hospital — unflinchingly documented the grim, relentless realities of the siege.

The work of Chernov, Maloletka, Stepanenko and Lori Hinnant last year won the Pulitzer Prize for public service, and the film has won numerous accolades, including a Directors Guild Award. It is nominated in the best documentary category at the March 10 Academy Awards, the first-ever Oscar nomination for the 178-year-old AP.

Almost two years on since Russia's invasion, Ukrainian cities continue to be bombarded, with Russia claiming over the weekend to have captured the eastern city of Avdiivka after a long, grinding battle.

Read more [here](#).

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Margery Beck](#)

[Mark Knoller](#)

Stories of interest

The Extradition of Julian Assange Threatens Press Freedoms (New York Times)

By James Kirchick

Mr. Kirchick is the author of "Secret City: The Hidden History of Gay Washington," a contributing writer at Tablet and a senior fellow at the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression.

Fourteen years ago, at a human rights conference in Oslo, I met Julian Assange. From the moment I encountered the wraithlike WikiLeaks founder, I sensed that he might be a morally dubious character. My suspicions were confirmed upon witnessing his speech at the conference, in which he listed Israel alongside Iran and China as part of

a “rogue’s gallery of states” and compared the Guantánamo Bay detention facility to a Nazi concentration camp.

Nothing Mr. Assange has said or done in the intervening 14 years has altered my initial impression of him as a man unhealthily preoccupied with the shortcomings of democracies and suspiciously uninterested in the crimes of dictatorships. In the months following our meeting, WikiLeaks published hundreds of thousands of U.S. diplomatic cables and military files, collectively constituting the largest leak of classified government documents in history.

Though Mr. Assange insisted that his purpose was to expose American abuses, the leaks were also a boon to the Taliban and other authoritarian forces around the world. According to two journalists working for The Guardian, one of the newspapers that collaborated with WikiLeaks in the initial publication of these documents, Mr. Assange had to be convinced to redact the names of Afghan civilians who had cooperated with the American military. “Well, they’re informants,” Mr. Assange defiantly told them. “So if they get killed, they’ve got it coming to them. They deserve it.”

Read more [here](#). Shared by Craig Klugman.

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Ross Gelbspan, Who Exposed Roots of Climate Change Deniers, Dies at 84 (New York Times)

By Trip Gabriel

Ross Gelbspan, an investigative journalist whose reporting on climate change exposed a campaign of disinformation by oil and gas lobbyists to sow doubt about global warming — a denialism that was embraced by Republican officials and, in some cases, by a credulous news media — died on Jan. 27 at his home in Boston. He was 84.

The cause was chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, his wife, Anne Gelbspan, said.

Mr. Gelbspan’s career included reporting on dissidents in the Soviet Union and on F.B.I. harassment of domestic critics, and his interest in the climate crisis, like those other subjects, came from a sense of outrage that powerful interests were suppressing information needed for democracy.

“I didn’t get into the climate issue because I love the trees — I tolerate the trees,” he said on YouTube last year. “I got into the issue because I learned the coal industry was paying a handful of scientists under the table to say nothing was happening to the climate.”

Read more [here](#). Shared by Richard Chady.

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Exclusive: Navalny’s Letters from the Gulag (The Free Press)

By The Free Press

Natan Sharansky, one of the great heroes of the twentieth century, corresponded with Alexei Navalny, one of the great heroes of the twenty-first. Navalny, through his lawyers, managed to get a Russian copy of Sharansky's famous memoir *Fear No Evil*. He read it in the gulag where he was killed on February 16, 2024. We know this because he sent Sharansky two letters: one in March and one in April of 2023.

Today we are honored to publish these historic letters in their original, handwritten Russian and in English. (We are grateful to Anna Lyubarskaja and Rebekah Koffler for their help with translation.)

There are so many things that are striking about this correspondence: their erudition; their Biblical references ("Everything according to Ecclesiastes: what was, will be," writes Navalny); their moral clarity ("In prison I discovered that in addition to the law of universal gravitation of particles there is also a law of universal gravitation of souls," Sharansky writes. "By remaining a free person in prison, you, Aleksei, influence the souls of millions of people worldwide.")

But most striking of all is their humor. Sharansky calls the punishment cell his "alma mater." Navalny jokes that there is no better place to spend Holy Week than in the punishment cell (known as SHIZO). And so on.

Sharansky ends his second letter with this line: "Judging by all of your time in SHIZO, you will soon beat all of my records. I hope you don't succeed in this." As he told me over the phone last week, after he learned Navalny was killed: "We dissidents use black humor. But this joke is even more black than I thought."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sonya Zalubowski.

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Long Island University announces 2023 George Polk Awards in Journalism

Press Release | Long Island University

Five recipients of the 2023 George Polk Awards, announced today by Long Island University, were for coverage of the Israel/Gaza and Russia/Ukraine wars in a year when the university is marking the 75th anniversary of one of American journalism's prized honors.

Revelatory reporting on the business practices of Elon Musk, the questionable ethics of U.S. Supreme Court justices and an insidious approach to dealing with relatives of individuals killed by police are among 14 awards in 13 categories. Two of the other winners exposed dangerously faulty medical devices while others unearthed a lucrative trade in temporary license plates from phony car dealerships, laid bare

Colorado's dysfunctional family courts and uncovered the illegal arrest and detention of hundreds of children in rural Tennessee.

The Sydney Schanberg Prize in long-form journalism goes to a veteran conflict reporter who embedded himself with rival gang lords to examine the total breakdown of civic life in Haiti.

The George Polk Awards were established in 1949 by LIU to commemorate George Polk, a CBS correspondent murdered in 1948 while covering the Greek civil war. The awards, which place a premium on investigative and enterprising reporting that gains attention and achieves results, are conferred annually to honor special achievement in journalism. The latest winners were selected from 497 submissions of work that appeared in print, online or on television or radio, nominated by news organizations and individuals or recommended by a national panel of advisors.

To celebrate the 75th anniversary, the university is inviting all previous recipients, thought to number about 600, to join this year's winners at a luncheon sponsored by CBS in Manhattan April 12. At the same time, 16 outstanding journalists whose careers reflect a commitment to deep investigative reporting will be honored as "George Polk laureates." The luncheon at Cipriani 42nd Street will be followed by an evening symposium, "Journalism in an Age of Disinformation, Digital Media and AI," at the Times Center on West 41st Street.

"Given the significance of this year's program we sensed a special imperative to honor work in the tradition of George Polk," said John Darnton, curator of the awards, "and as horrific as the outbreak of war in the Middle East and the ongoing fighting in Ukraine were, they provided us with no shortage of magnificent reporting, done at great peril, from which to choose."

Read more [here](#).

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Journalists turn to picket lines as the news business ails (NPR)

By David Folkenflik

As the news business craters under dwindling audiences, slashed budgets and mass layoffs, journalists have taken to picket lines in protest.

Over the past two years, they have gone on strike against their corporate owners in cities big and small, including New York, Los Angeles., Washington D.C., San Antonio, Naples, Fla., Rochester N.Y. and Pittsburgh.

At the national level, the efforts have been led by a 36-year-old former data reporter for The Los Angeles Times who finds himself much in demand.

"They're desperate to do this work — to tell the stories that the folks in our communities want to hear," says Jon Schleuss, now the president of the NewsGuild-CWA. "When you have corporations, hedge funds, the billionaire [owners] and then really bad management, they're looking around being like, 'What's going to happen? ... Who's going to be here?'"

Read more [here](#).

The Final Word

Bailey Hood, Palm Springs Diva, Dies



Jim Hood - A snippy, streetwise pup from the mean streets of Riverside, California, Bailey Hood, died Sunday, Feb. 18, in the posh surroundings to which she had become accustomed. The fluffy white beauty's early life is obscure but she worked her way from hard-scrabble Riverside to Palm Springs, the winter playground of Los Angeles, and to a summer home in leafy Oakton, Va.

Bailey, who claimed to be about seven years old, had an early life as a Riverside street dog. Legend has it she was hit by a UPS truck at some point and retained a lifelong antipathy to delivery trucks, attacking them with vigor at any opportunity.

Bailey was adopted in 2020 by a university hospital scientist. She served as caregiver to the biochemist's ailing mother but was accused of frequent attacks on other canine residents and soon found herself facing homelessness once again.

Bailey's luck changed when she was adopted by Joan and Jim Hood, noted Palm Springs dog fanciers and small-time do-gooders. They worked with Bailey and helped her clean up her act to win tentative acceptance in Palm Springs canine circles.

Though she presented herself as a West Highlands Terrier (or "Westie"), DNA tests revealed she was actually a more workmanlike Scottish Terrier with traces of other breeds, including Poodle, Maltese, Chihuahua and Mexican Street Dog, though the test results were hushed up by her handlers.

But time eventually caught up with Bailey. A bout of illness brought her to the attention of a local veterinary team, who sniffed dismissively after a cursory exam.

"This dog is dying of old age. Her systems are shutting down," they said. "She's at least 11, maybe 12 years old. Look – she's even got cataracts."

Told that no treatments would turn back the hands of time and provide more than fleeting relief, the Hoods agreed to let Bailey go the way of all good dogs and she was peacefully euthanized at a local animal shelter as Hood stroked her tummy.

"She was our beautiful little girl," Hood said. "We didn't get nearly enough time with her."

Today in History - Feb. 20, 2024



Today is Tuesday, Feb. 20, the 51st day of 2024. There are 315 days left in the year.

Today's highlight

On Feb. 20, 1962, astronaut John Glenn became the first American to orbit the Earth as he flew aboard Project Mercury's Friendship 7 spacecraft, which circled the globe three times in a flight lasting 4 hours, 55 minutes and 23 seconds before splashing down safely in the Atlantic Ocean 800 miles southeast of Bermuda.

On this date

In 1792, President George Washington signed an act creating the United States Post Office Department.

In 1862, William Wallace Lincoln, the 11-year-old son of President Abraham Lincoln and first lady Mary Todd Lincoln, died at the White House, apparently of typhoid fever.

In 1905, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, upheld, 7-2, compulsory vaccination laws intended to protect the public's health.

In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt signed an immigration act which excluded "idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded persons, epileptics, insane persons" from being admitted to the United States.

In 1933, Congress proposed the 21st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to repeal Prohibition.

In 1938, Anthony Eden resigned as British foreign secretary following Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's decision to negotiate with Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

In 1965, America's Ranger 8 spacecraft crashed on the moon, as planned, after sending back thousands of pictures of the lunar surface.

In 1987, a bomb left by Unabomber Ted Kaczynski exploded behind a computer store in Salt Lake City, seriously injuring store owner Gary Wright.

In 1998, Tara Lipinski of the U.S. won the ladies' figure skating gold medal at the Nagano Olympics; Michelle Kwan won the silver.

In 2003, a fire sparked by pyrotechnics broke out during a concert by the group Great White at The Station nightclub in West Warwick, Rhode Island, killing 100 people and injuring about 200 others.

In 2005, death claimed actor Sandra Dee at age 62; musical actor John Raitt at age 88; and counterculture writer Hunter S. Thompson at age 67.

In 2020, a poll by the Associated Press and the NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found more Americans expressing some concern about catching the flu than about catching the coronavirus.

In 2021, Naomi Osaka won her fourth Grand Slam trophy by pulling away to beat Jennifer Brady 6-4, 6-3 in the Australian Open final.

Today's birthdays: Racing Hall of Famer Roger Penske is 87. Singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie is 83. Hockey Hall of Famer Phil Esposito is 82. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is 82. Movie director Mike Leigh is 81. Actor Brenda Blethyn is 78. Actor Sandy Duncan is 78. Actor Peter Strauss is 77. Rock musician Billy Zoom (X) is 76. Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown is 73. Actor John Voldstad is 73. Newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst is 70. Actor Anthony Head is 70. Country singer Leland Martin is 67. Actor James Wilby is 66. Rock musician Sebastian Steinberg is 65. Comedian Joel Hodgson is 64. Basketball Hall of Famer Charles Barkley is 61. Rock musician Ian Brown (Stone Roses) is 61. Actor French Stewart is 60. Actor Ron Eldard is 59. Model Cindy Crawford is 58. Actor Andrew Shue is 57. Actor Lili Taylor is 57. Actor Andrea Savage is 51. Singer Brian Littrell is 49. Actor Lauren Ambrose is 46.

Actor Jay Hernandez is 46. Actor Chelsea Peretti is 46. Country musician Coy Bowles is 45. Actor Michael Zegen is 45. Actor Majandra Delfino is 43. Actor Jocko Sims is 43. Singer-musician Chris Thile is 43. Actor-singer Jessie Mueller is 41. MLB All-Star pitcher Justin Verlander is 41. Comedian Trevor Noah is 40. Actor Jake Richardson is 39. Actor Daniella Pineda is 37. Actor Miles Teller is 37. Singer Rihanna is 36. Actor Jack Falahee 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.

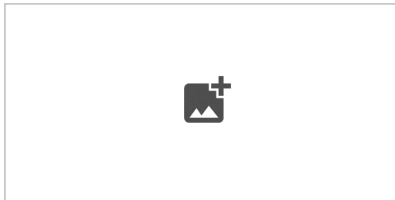
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

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

Paul Stevens

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