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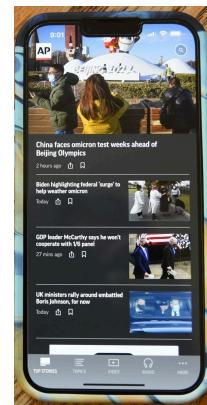
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Connecting

Feb. 28, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this Feb. 28, 2024, the last day of February...BUT WAIT!

Here's a call to Connecting colleagues who will celebrate their birthday tomorrow, on Feb. 29, in this Leap Year of 2024.

My own birthday list and my Facebook birthday list show no colleagues who were born that date, but both are incomplete – so if you're one with a Feb. 29 birthday, please let us know and perhaps share what it's like to have a birthday on that day.

Meantime, we bring you a couple stories about Leap Year.

We lead with news of a new book out by our colleague [Colleen Newvine](#), product manager for the AP Stylebook and a longtime good friend. It's called "Your Mini Sabbatical" and it may apply to you, especially if you harbor these questions:

Have you ever gone on vacation and fantasized about tearing up your return ticket?

Have you dreamed of quitting your job?

Have you wondered what your life would be like on that path not chosen?

What if you could run away to chase your dreams – without hitting the eject button on your regular life?

You can do it. Even if you're pretty sure you can't.

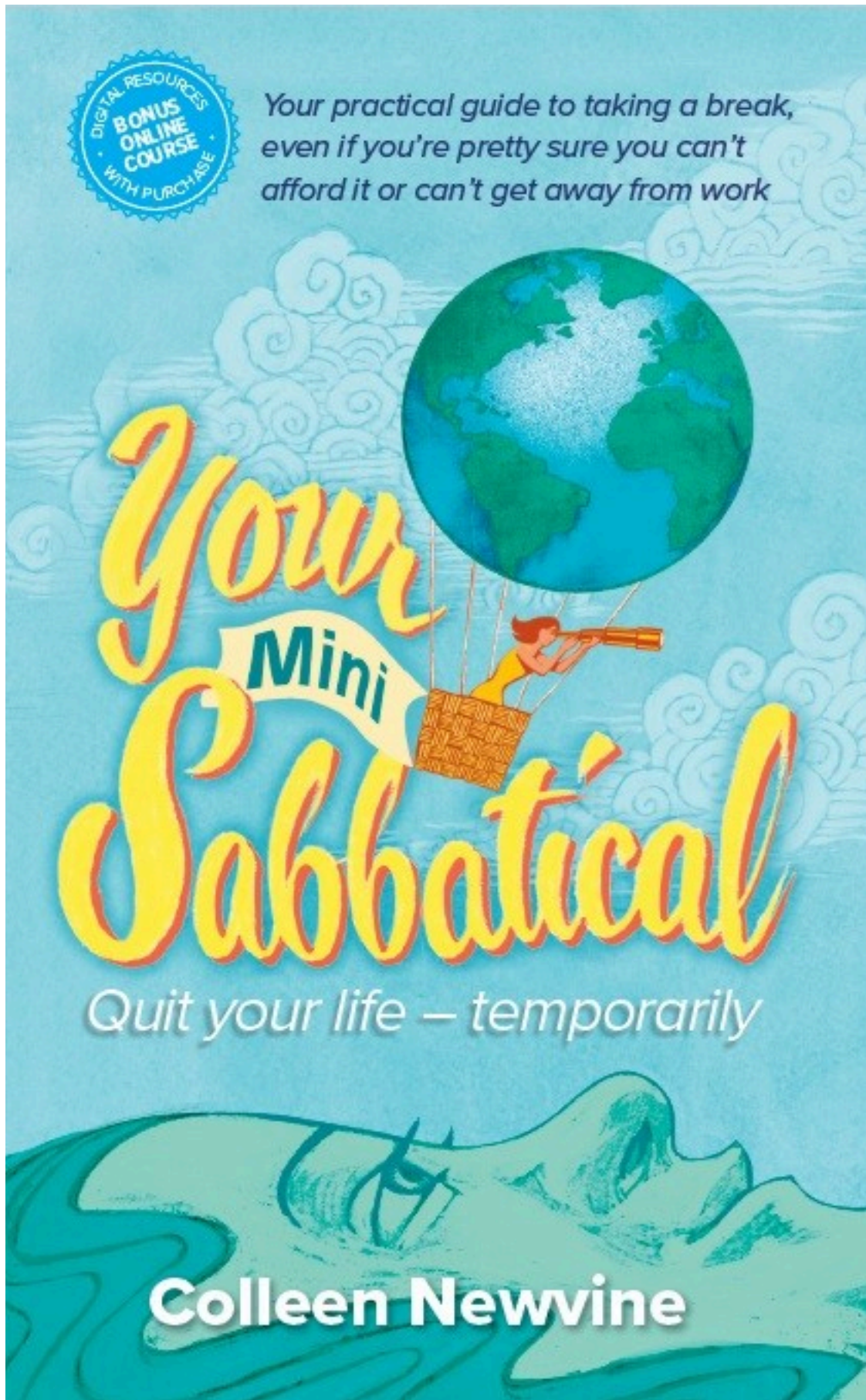
If you're longing for freedom and adventure, it's time for a mini sabbatical.

A SUGGESTION FOR NEWSPAPERS: From [Joe Galu](#): “If people are serious about newspapers keeping voters aware, the newspapers should stop demanding that people subscribe to see election-related stories. Many websites are NOTHING but demands that people subscribe or get to see often-meaningless headlines. There should be a way to ban newspaper websites that do not allow people to see ANY of the articles without subscribing.”

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

Paul

Your Mini Sabbatical



Colleen Newwine, the longtime product manager for the AP Stylebook, started her career as a reporter and editor, and she's written a book that's out this month: "Your

Mini Sabbatical.”

Colleen draws on more than a decade of packing up with her husband, and sometimes their two cats, to live in places ranging from New Orleans and San Francisco to a cottage near the Atlantic Ocean on Long Island and three Costa Rican beach towns, then happily returning to her life in Brooklyn, New York.

If you’ve seen photos of Colleen at Mardi Gras in this newsletter, it’s likely she was on a mini sabbatical then.

Colleen is not only sharing her decade of invaluable wisdom. She’s rounded up a diverse mix of fellow sabbatical travelers who share their own experiences and insights.



It’s available in print and as an e-book, and both formats come with a discount code to take an accompanying online course to help you plan your mini sabbatical.

Click [here](#) for the Amazon link.

What would happen without a Leap Day? More than you might think



BY LEANNE ITALIE

NEW YORK (AP) — Leap year. It's a delight for the calendar and math nerds among us. So how did it all begin and why?

Have a look at some of the numbers, history and lore behind the (not quite) every four year phenom that adds a 29th day to February.

BY THE NUMBERS

The math is mind-boggling in a layperson sort of way and down to fractions of days and minutes. There's even a leap second occasionally, but there's no hullabaloo when that happens.

The thing to know is that leap year exists, in large part, to keep the months in sync with annual events, including equinoxes and solstices, according to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology.

It's a correction to counter the fact that Earth's orbit isn't precisely 365 days a year. The trip takes about six hours longer than that, NASA says.

Contrary to what some might believe, however, not every four years is a leaper. Adding a leap day every four years would make the calendar longer by more than 44 minutes, according to the National Air & Space Museum.

Later, on a calendar yet to come (we'll get to it), it was decreed that years divisible by 100 not follow the four-year leap day rule unless they are also divisible by 400, the JPL notes. In the past 500 years, there was no leap day in 1700, 1800 and 1900, but 2000 had one. In the next 500 years, if the practice is followed, there will be no leap day in 2100, 2200, 2300 and 2500.

Still with us?

The next leap years are 2028, 2032 and 2036.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Lindel Hutson.

What's it like to have a leap year birthday?

Having a Feb. 29 birthday is fodder for jokes, some confusion and maybe even extra celebrations. Massachusetts' "leap year babies" share their thoughts.

By LIZ NEISLOSS
GBH News

Annabella Gualdoni of Brookline will celebrate her 14th birthday this year, but she's really turning 56. And Jeff Johnson of Amesbury is celebrating his 17th birthday, but he'll really be 55.

They're both "leap year babies" — people, who in 2024, will get the opportunity to mark their rare birthday on the day itself. February 29, with a few exceptions, only comes around every four years — and it's a birthday that presents occasional bureaucratic challenges and spawns plenty of jokes.

"You have everybody saying 'ah, you don't have a birthday. No birthday for you this year.' You know, family members, it was a big joke." said Johnson.

People have told Gualdoni, "that day doesn't exist." A friend suggested she celebrate on two days — February 28 and March 1 — when there's no 29th.

"I do now, mostly just to give my husband a hard time that he has to be nice to me for two days instead of just one," laughed Gualdoni.

Charlestown resident Callen Chambers is turning 4 this year. He has no doubt about what he wants to do on his first leap year birthday.

"Eat cake!" he said.

Read more [here](#).

Connecting series:

Your stories of serving on a jury

[Lynne Harris](#) - Ah, jury service.....as I resident of Manhattan all my adult life, jury service calls were a regular thing - every two or three years you were summoned. At that time, jury service lasted two weeks. I was called for a case where the estate of a deceased man was suing his employer for asbestos poisoning. I waited over a week and a half before they finally questioned me.....they asked where I worked and what I did. I told them I worked for Associated Press, in the Administrative Services department. When asked what the department did, I said....bureau real estate, facilities management and.....asbestos abatement. The judge jumped up and ordered me and all the attorneys into the back hallway. I was told that he couldn't put me on the jury and I was immediately excused.

Shortly after that, they expanded the jury pool and you only had to serve three days if you didn't get chosen for a case.

The best experience was in 2016, when I was called for Grand Jury service. I wasn't even questioned, they just called my name and I had to serve. It was a fascinating, interesting experience. Every day for a month, from 1-4 pm, we gathered in the Grand Jury room at the courthouse.

The case involved a relative of a famous designer who, during Fashion Week, got drunk/stoned and fell asleep in the stairway of the Dream Hotel (in downtown Manhattan). He was ejected from the hotel and wandered into a nearby loading dock where he saw a truck with the keys in the ignition. He stole the truck, destroyed a taxi sitting in front of the loading dock and headed uptown. He crashed into two other

vehicles and finally broad-sided a crosstown NYC bus.... hitting it so hard that the driver was ejected from the vehicle and died. The lone passenger in the bus was bounced around like a ping-pong ball (we saw the camera footage). The truck ended up smashing into construction scaffolding and taking out a coffee cart owner and his customer. Needless to say, we indicted him.

We were 16 people, together for month, who worked together as a team. It was good experience. I have not been called for jury service since then.....and hope I won't be called ever again.

-0-

Mike Harris - With all the moving around we did during my AP career, I was only summoned for jury duty a few times and I only had to show up at the courthouse once. That was in 1998 in Raleigh, NC.

I was in the midst of the auto racing season when I got the summons for jury duty. I took advantage of the option to ask for a later date, but the time eventually came when I had to make the trek to downtown Raleigh. I had scheduled my appearance for one of my rare weeks off the road between February and December, the auto racing season.

A large number of people were gathered in a very large courtroom but, after watching a film about the responsibility of being a juror and a talk from a court bailiff about how the morning would work, we were escorted into a smaller courtroom in small groups.

At that point, the bailiff explained that the judge would momentarily explain what the trial would entail and that we would then have the opportunity to be asked to be released from our obligation "if there was a personal or moral reason for not taking part in the trial."

This was on a Tuesday and I knew I had to leave for a race on Thursday of the following week, which made me more than a bit nervous about the time frame of this trial.

The judge, a serious-looking man of about 60, explained that we were being asked to sit for a murder trial involving a man who was charged with killing his girlfriend and then fleeing to another state. He had been captured and brought back to face trial. The judge said the trial could go on for several weeks and then asked the jury pool who felt that this would be a hardship for them or their family.

About half the 50 or so people in the room, including me, raised their hands. The judge, looking at us with a stony face, said, "You do know this is your obligation as a citizen? But I will listen to your reasons."

At least he did not say excuses.

The judge then called us up one by one to listen to the reasons for opting out of the trial. We could all hear the conversations and the judge was not making it easy. Other than a man in the Army Reserve who was supposed to leave for his summer camp and

a pregnant woman due in the next two or three weeks, he rejected all of the reasons for being released from the jury pool.

When it was my turn, I was very nervous, but I told the judge that I was the motorsports editor for The Associated Press and that I was responsible for covering races 40 weeks a year, many of them by myself. I had non-refundable airlines tickets, hotel reservations and, during the season, was on the road from Thursday until Monday with very few weeks off.

He looked at me with some doubt and said, "Isn't there anyone else who can fill in for you for a few weeks?" I replied, "Auto racing is not like baseball or football or basketball. Not everyone has a working knowledge of the sport or the people involved. And it would be a hardship for the local AP bureaus to find someone to cover a race at the last minute."

The judge's serious expression gave me little hope and I was already thinking how I would have to call then-Sports Editor Terry Taylor and explain the situation. But the judge, to my amazement, finally said. "Okay, you're released. You may leave."

As I started to turn and walk away, I heard the judge say, "Mr. Harris, do you know Jeff Gordon?"

A bit confused, I said, "Yes, your honor,"

With a surprising smile, he said, "Well tell him he's my favorite driver."

As I walked out of the courthouse, I thought, "Only in North Carolina NASCAR country."

AP sighting



AP retirees Mike Recht and Adolphe Bernotas at the annual Greek Festival in Port Charlotte, Florida, on Sunday, Feb. 25. (Recht, Red Sox hat; Bernotas, Brooklyn Dodgers cap).

Stories of interest

Our most basic truth - And the only rule for how to tell it (Columbia Journalism Review)

By CHARLES FOSTER

Are you a journalistic god? Do you believe that your piece is the truth—that, by arduous training and rigorous discipline, you see reality without the obfuscating

subjectivity of mere mortals? Or are you a campaigning zealot, unapologetically and passionately in the arena?

The gods are more wrong than the campaigners, for the gods lack self-knowledge, humility, a basic understanding of epistemology, and often empathy, whereas the campaigners lack only despair.

The gods, not being actual gods, are purporting to achieve the impossible; the campaigners rightly seek to achieve the improbable. But both should change. The gods should abandon their hubris because they are deluding themselves and misleading their readers.

The campaigners should lay down their arms, because the way they've been taught to wield them makes them servants of ideas rather than people, and the meanest and most corrupt person matters more than the most elevated idea.

There is a better moral and journalistic principle than this: dignity. To explain what I mean, I have to start right at the beginning. With the Big Bang.

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

-0-

WuvDay App Turns Smartphone Users Into Verified and Paid Journalists (PetaPixel)

By TED KRITSONIS

Italy-based WuvDay aims to fight against fake news and deepfake content by utilizing the smartphones average people hold in their hands through an onboard verification platform.

The general idea is to offer access to GPS and timestamped photos and video taken from smartphones through the app, all of which confirm the location and metadata to confirm there was no editing or manipulation. Media outlets can request or purchase available content to use themselves, with the money going straight to those who shot the images or footage.

WuvDay demonstrated its app and website at the Mobile World Congress (MWC) in Barcelona as part of an Italian delegation of small companies and startups. Though based in Italy, the app is globally available on iOS and Android and applicable to anyone, while the website works on all browsers. It currently supports five languages: English, Italian, Spanish, French, and Portuguese. WuvDay's CEO Giuseppe Carapellese spoke with PetaPixel to explain how it works and what to expect.

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

-0-

Veteran NFL reporter and columnist Peter King announces his retirement (USA Today)

By Steve Gardner

Legendary pro football columnist Peter King has announced his retirement from full-time writing.

King broke the news to readers in his weekly "Football Morning in America" column for NBC Sports, calling himself "the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

King is calling it quits after 44 years as a sportswriter, covering the last 40 Super Bowls and writing his weekly column – which was originally called "Monday Morning Quarterback" when it began at Sports Illustrated – for the past 27 years.

In his farewell column, King listed several factors that led to his decision to retire – among them his declining interest in the day-to-day news cycle, a desire to try something new, his unsuccessful attempts to scale back the scope of his 10,000-word columns, and a need to spend more time with his family.

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

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Covering autocracy in 2024: Without modification or moderation (Editor and Publisher)

Michael Bugeja | for Editor & Publisher

Mediaite, a leading source for political news, recently reported what Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said in response to former President Donald Trump's remark about immigrants "poisoning" American blood.

"Well," McConnell replied, referring to his Taiwanese-born spouse, "it strikes me that didn't bother him when he appointed Elaine Chao Secretary of Transportation."

Mediaite then referenced a 2022 comment Trump made about McConnell approving Democrat-sponsored bills. "He has a DEATH WISH. Must immediately seek help and advise (sic) from his China loving wife, Coco Chow!"

Mediaite noted that the attack on Chao "was widely seen" as racist.

It was racist.

The same report also observed that Trump's death wish remark "was interpreted by critics" as a threat against McConnell.

It was a threat.

Read more [here](#).

The Final Word

CRANKSHAFT By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers



Shared by Jim Bagby, Adolphe Bernotas.

Today in History - Feb. 28, 2024



Today is Wednesday, Feb. 28, the 59th day of 2024. There are 307 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 28, 2013, Benedict XVI became the first pope in 600 years to resign, ending an eight-year pontificate. (Benedict was succeeded the following month by Pope Francis.)

On this date:

In 1844, a 12-inch gun aboard the USS Princeton exploded as the ship was sailing on the Potomac River, killing Secretary of State Abel P. Upshur, Navy Secretary Thomas W. Gilmer and several others.

In 1849, the California gold rush began in earnest as regular steamship service started bringing gold-seekers to San Francisco.

In 1911, President William Howard Taft nominated William H. Lewis to be the first Black Assistant Attorney General of the United States.

In 1953, scientists James D. Watson and Francis H.C. Crick announced they had discovered the double-helix structure of DNA.

In 1972, President Richard M. Nixon and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai issued the Shanghai Communique, which called for normalizing relations between their countries, at the conclusion of Nixon's historic visit to China.

In 1975, 42 people were killed in London's Underground when a train smashed into the end of a tunnel.

In 1993, a gun battle erupted at a religious compound near Waco, Texas, when Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents tried to arrest Branch Davidian leader David Koresh on weapons charges; four agents and six Davidians were killed as a 51-day standoff began.

In 1996, Britain's Princess Diana agreed to divorce Prince Charles. (Their 15-year marriage officially ended in August 1996; Diana died in a car crash in Paris a year after that.)

In 2009, Paul Harvey, the news commentator and talk-radio pioneer whose staccato style made him one of the nation's most familiar voices, died in Phoenix at age 90.

In 2012, Republican Mitt Romney won presidential primary victories in Arizona and Michigan.

In 2014, delivering a blunt warning to Moscow, President Barack Obama expressed deep concern over reported military activity inside Ukraine by Russia and warned "there will be costs" for any intervention.

In 2018, students and teachers returned under police guard to Florida's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School as classes resumed for the first time since a shooting that killed 17 people.

In 2020, the number of countries touched by the coronavirus climbed to nearly 60. The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished the week 12.4% lower in the market's worst weekly performance since the 2008 financial crisis.

In 2022, Russian forces shelled Ukraine's second-largest city, rocking a residential neighborhood, and closed in on the capital, Kyiv, in a 17-mile convoy of hundreds of tanks and other vehicles.

Today's birthdays: Architect Frank Gehry is 95. Singer Sam the Sham is 87. Actor-director-dancer Tommy Tune is 85. Hall of Fame auto racer Mario Andretti is 84. Actor Kelly Bishop is 80. Actor Stephanie Beacham is 77. Writer-director Mike Figgis is 76. Actor Mercedes Ruehl is 76. Actor Bernadette Peters is 76. Former Energy Secretary

Steven Chu is 76. Actor Ilene Graff is 75. Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman is 71. Basketball Hall of Famer Adrian Dantley is 69. Actor John Turturro is 67. Rock singer Cindy Wilson is 67. Actor Rae Dawn Chong is 63. Actor Maxine Bahns is 55. Actor Robert Sean Leonard is 55. Rock singer Pat Monahan is 55. Author Daniel Handler (aka "Lemony Snicket") is 54. Actor Tasha Smith is 53. Actor Rory Cochrane is 52. Actor Ali Larter is 48. Country singer Jason Aldean is 47. Actor Geoffrey Arend is 46. Actor Melanie Chandra (TV: "Code Black") is 40. Actor Michelle Horn is 37. MLB relief pitcher Aroldis Chapman is 36. Actor True O'Brien is 30. Actor Madisen Beaty is 29. Actor Quinn Shephard is 29. Actor Bobb'e J. Thompson is 28.

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.

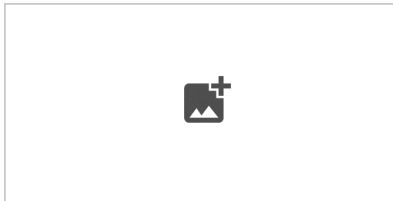
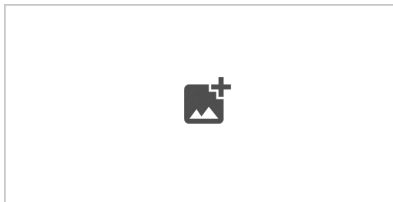
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

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

Paul Stevens

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