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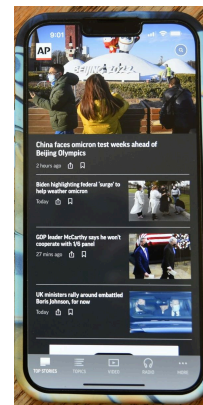
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# Connecting

March 20, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this March 20, 2024,

It was a one-two punch to the gut for The Associated Press – the news Tuesday that Gannett and McClatchy, the two largest newspaper chains in the country, plan to cut back their AP services drastically by the end of this month.

Our colleague **Mark Mittelstadt** used the boxing analogy in a perspective he shares in today's Connecting.

Contract negotiations with both groups had been ongoing for some time, but the announcement of their decisions Tuesday came as a surprise. When the Gannett memo to staff was made public, AP's **Lauren Easton**, vice president for corporate communications, said, "We are shocked and disappointed to see the memo." The McClatchy announcement came later in the day.

**CNN Reliable Sources wrote:** "The Disassociated Press: The two largest newspaper chains in the country are dramatically scaling back their relationship with the

Associated Press, a pair of seismic moves that will impact how millions of people across the U.S. receive their news."

How bad will it be, if the two chains indeed plan to follow through with their announcements beyond the end of their current contracts - Gannett's to expire at the end of 2024, McClatchy's in early 2025?

Revenue from U.S. newspapers is roughly 10 percent of the AP's income, and Easton told The New York Times, "The loss of McClatchy and Gannett would not have a material impact on our overall revenue."

In a statement, she said, "We are disappointed in this news from Gannett and McClatchy, as conversations with both news organizations have been productive and are ongoing. We remain hopeful Gannett and McClatchy will continue to support the AP beyond the end of their membership terms.

"We appreciate that these are difficult decisions to make and deeply understand the challenges the news industry faces. At the same time, this would be a disservice to news consumers across the U.S. who would no longer see fact-based journalism from the AP."

**IT'S NOT PERSONAL, IT'S STRICTLY BUSINESS:** Well, I guess that line from the Godfather applies here, but the news hits home and is indeed personal for Ye Olde Connecting Editor, a self-admitted Luddite who gets home delivery of The Kansas City Star (McClatchy) and USA Today (Gannett). I enjoy both newspapers. If they do officially part the AP that I love and believe in, I'll need to make a decision. In all the places we've lived over the years, I've never had a hometown newspaper that wasn't an AP member. Lots of negotiation remains. I'm hopeful both groups will stay and that their products will continue to be thrown onto my driveway.

Our colleague **Mike Hendricks'** story in Tuesday's issue on the closing of the Albany bureau offices resulted in some interesting responses. We bring them to you in today's issue.

**JIM WILLIS OBITUARY:** Click [here](#) for the obituary of our colleague Jim Willis, former AP Jefferson City correspondent, shared by his wife Debbie. Jim died March 11 at the age of 78.

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

Paul

## Gannett, McClatchy news chains say they will stop using Associated Press content

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — The Gannett and McClatchy news chains, publishers of more than 230 outlets including USA Today and the Miami Herald, have said they will stop using

journalism from The Associated Press amid continued financial pressures for the news industry.

The decision by Gannett, the nation's largest newspaper chain, severs a century-old partnership. It "enables us to invest further in our newsrooms," Gannett spokeswoman Lark-Marie Anton said on Tuesday.

A memo from Gannett's chief content officer Kristin Roberts directed the chain's editors to stop using stories, videos and images provided by AP on March 25. The memo, obtained by The Associated Press, was first reported by The New York Times.



Shortly after, AP said it had been informed by McClatchy that it would also drop the service. A McClatchy spokesperson did not immediately return messages seeking comment.

Like most newspaper companies, Gannett and McClatchy have been struggling financially for several years.

Gannett's workforce shrank 47% between 2020 and 2023 because of layoffs and attrition, according to the NewsGuild. The company also hasn't earned a full-year profit since 2018, according to data provided by FactSet. Since then, it has lost \$1.03 billion. The hedge fund Chatham Asset Management took control of the formerly family-owned McClatchy, with outlets in 30 U.S. markets, in a bankruptcy auction in 2020.

The AP was disappointed, considering there had been productive discussions with both news organizations, spokeswoman Lauren Easton said. The news cooperative remains hopeful that both chains would continue to support AP beyond their current contracts, she said.

"We appreciate that these are difficult decisions to make and deeply understand the challenges the news industry faces," Easton said. "At the same time, this would be a disservice to news consumers across the U.S. who would no longer see fact-based journalism from the AP."

Those involved would not specifically discuss how much money the news chains would save by this move, although it is likely to be in the millions of dollars.

In an earlier era, when fees from U.S. newspapers provided AP with virtually all of its revenue, such decisions would have represented a financial earthquake for the news cooperative. But AP has diversified its services with the decline of newspapers and U.S. newspaper fees now constitute just over 10% of its annual income.

With reporters in all 50 states and nearly 100 countries, The Associated Press provides news through text, still photography, audio and video for news organizations that

can't afford such reportorial reach on their own. The company says that AP's journalism is seen by over half the world's population every day.

The AP won two Pulitzer Prizes last year for its coverage of the Ukraine war. Partnering with PBS' "Frontline," AP last week won its first Academy Award, with the film "20 Days in Mariupol" honored as best documentary feature.

AP's diversification efforts include offering its journalism directly to consumers through an advertising-supported website. The company also provides production services and software to newsrooms across the world. This week, AP launched an e-commerce site called AP Buyline, run by the company Taboola, that provides product content and reviews for consumers.

Gannett said it would continue paying for two of AP's most visible services: its extensive election-related polling and vote-counting, and the AP Stylebook that sets guidelines for journalism practices and word usage. It said it has signed an agreement with Reuters to provide news from around the world in multiple formats, including video.

"Key to this initiative is ensuring that we extend the reach of the work we do to more readers, viewers and listeners nationwide," Roberts said in her memo.

With a contract for AP's content that lasts to the end of 2024, it was not clear why Gannett is choosing to cut things off next week. While there remains the possibility that it represents a negotiating tactic for AP to lower its fees, Anton said she was not aware of any contract negotiations.

McClatchy's latest contract with AP was due to expire early next year, Easton said.

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

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From [The New York Times](#):

McClatchy, which the hedge fund Chatham Asset Management bought out of bankruptcy in 2020, told its editors this week that it would stop using some A.P. services next month. McClatchy operates about 30 newspapers, including The Miami Herald and The Kansas City Star, as well as a bureau in Washington, D.C.

In an email sent on Monday, Kathy Vetter, McClatchy's senior vice president of news and audience, said that The A.P.'s feed would end on March 29 and that no A.P. content could be published after March 31. She said, however, that McClatchy would continue to use The A.P.'s election results data.

"With this decision, we will no longer pay millions for content that serves less than 1 percent of our readers," Ms. Vetter wrote in the email, which was viewed by The New York Times. "In most cases we have found replacements. However, we are still working on a universal solution for state 'wires' content."

# Take a deep breath and move forward

**Mark Mittelstadt** - The news Tuesday that Gannett and then McClatchy were cutting back use of Associated Press services by the end of this month no doubt felt like a one-two punch to the gut for AP executives, employees and retirees.

The loss of revenue from the two major American newspaper chains could substantially impact the news cooperative's bottom line and potentially affect its services and employment. The loss of content sharing from those newspapers could be a double whammy.

As AP executives and retirees contemplate the potential losses, my encouragement is to take a deep breath, look forward and overcome this challenge.

We've been here before.

Every so often during my nearly three decades with AP, a publisher, top editor or newspaper chain executive would decide they didn't need AP. We can get what we need from other sources, potentially at a huge cost savings, they would reason. They would enter notices of cancellation and even stop using AP products.

It almost always never worked. By the end of the cancellation period, the newspaper or the group would decide that what they were getting was substandard or didn't fit their needs. They would lift the notice or they would renew their membership and services. We all would move forward.

It was not just news. Tribune Media Stocks, anyone?

Early in my tenure as a bureau chief (circa 1989) I was called to AP headquarters to fill in for an executive in what was then Newspaper Membership. A major news company had informed us it intended to cancel news services and would not be using AP content. My principal project was to review the company's content and to identify phrases, paragraphs, even full stories from AP that it had used without credit. In several instances the AP content was barely below the lead paragraph of a story carrying that company's journalist's byline or credit from another news service.

It was pretty clear the company was using a substantial amount of AP content without credit and possibly without paying for it. Membership executive Jim Lagier took my findings, presented it to the corporate executive who had decided they could do without AP and got the cancellation lifted.

That's not to minimize the current predicament. No one likes to lose major, paying customers, or members. A substantial case can be made to Gannett, I believe, that it already has reduced staff in so many locations to such levels that it needs MORE fact-based content from AP not LESS.

I pray that Daisy Veerasingham, her team and all of AP's workforce have the strength, courage, patience and wisdom to meet this challenge head on, for the benefit of the

company, the many people who rely on it, and news consumers across America and around the globe.

The world needs AP journalism.

## Remembering Jim Willis

**Ellen Miller** - I worked with Willis in the Bismarck bureau during the 1977 legislative session that became known for the Fun Time bus that created a statewide furor. When the Carter administration announced it would kill several western water projects, including the Garrison Diversion in North Dakota, the Legislature decided to travel as a group to make a show of force at a federal hearing in Jamestown. It took four busloads to take everybody and one of them brought along fixings for Bloody Marys and screwdrivers. On the way home, the bus stopped at every bar between Jamestown and Bismarck. Alas for Willis, he was on a dry bus. The newspaper reporter on the boozy bus, and my memory can't pull her name or paper, spilled the beans and alerted Willis, who immediately put the story on the wire, dictating to me in the Bismarck bureau where I had been assigned to hold the fort. Within a few hours, the state switchboards were jammed by calls from outraged voters. The general desk called about a budget line and story for Sunday on the AAA wire. Willis tapped every source he had to answer members' demands for the list of legislators who rode on the Fun Time bus. I'll never forget collaborating with Willis on the lede for the Sunday AAA story: "North Dakota wheat farmers don't drink Bloody Marys and screwdrivers on their way to work in the morning, and don't think their legislators should, either."

Rest in peace, my friend.

## Closing of the AP's Albany bureau

**Peter Eisner** - One of my earliest AP memories was before I was hired -- as a reporter at the Hudson Register-Star and Poughkeepsie Journal in 1973-1974, I was able to supplement my meager income by fielding obits to Charlie Hanley when he was AP Albany News Editor -- \$2 each -- and Sunday features -- \$3. Charlie and I later became friends and colleagues on the foreign desk in New York. I joked to him that he was behind in my payments and owed me something like \$8. Hey, with inflation, Charlie, it sounds like real money by now!

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**Joe Galu** - Sad to read about the demise of the Albany bureau. We took good care of our member papers and broadcast stations. They will feel the loss as much as anybody.

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**Bill Hendrick** - Interesting. My first AP bureau was in Birmingham, Ala., in a corridor that connected two large newspapers, the Post-Herald and the BM News. Both had large staffs. Neither exists now. If you went to one of the papers and walked thru a

corridor to get to the other, you'd see the AP office, which had four employees. The Louisville bureau was in the Courier-Journal building and big enough to have a chief technician named Jenx (don't remember his title or name). In the Atlanta bureau, we had probably a dozen operators and a computer named 'Pete' that was probably 30 yards long, floor to ceiling, in its own air-conditioned room. In BM and LX, strangers from the street would wander in and ask for tours and explanations of the dozen or more clacking teletype machines, including two message wires, one regional, one national. And now I think the Courier Journal is on life support, the LX Times is defunct, and the BM newspapers are as dead as 4 o'clock. So damned sad.

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**Mike Holmes** - I understand the economics, but I'm sorry to see the AP closing its physical bureaus. Having an office once allowed me to beat a speeding ticket.

When I joined up in 1977, the AP bureau was in a tiny, windowless room on the 5th floor Of the Des Moines Register & Tribune building. We were working out of that office when I got a 4 a.m. phone call from Iowa news editor Don Beman. "Get to the office right away," he told a groggy me. "The building's on fire. Call your story to Omaha; they're filing the wire for us."

As I sped toward downtown, I envisioned a towering inferno. Then I saw the flashing lights of a police cruiser in my rear-view mirror. "Where's the fire?" the officer asked (honestly!). "In my office," I replied, explaining that I worked in the R&T building. He said he'd heard that call on his radio and let me go — with a stern warning to stop speeding.

Turns out, the blaze was minor. A light bulb had burst in the press room, setting some newsprint on fire. The damage was minimal, and the presses rolled on time for that afternoon's edition of the Tribune.

The Des Moines bureau later relocated to a modern downtown bank building where we got much more space, nice new furniture and lots of windows. But no excuse for speeding.

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**Bill Morrissey** - THIS IS A FICTIONAL REPORT TO MAKE A POINT

ALBANY (XX) — RIP!

The Associated Press, the oldest news agency in the United States, has, after 178 years, shut down news editing functions in Albany, New York, the capital city of the state. Three reporters remain, two on legislative and government assignments, and one on general assignment.

The collegiality of AP reporters in the New York cities of Buffalo, Syracuse and Albany and associate reporters, known as stringers, in Rochester, Ithaca, Utica, Corning, Niagara Falls, and many other cities in the state is replaced by reporters working by themselves.

Similar executive decisions have been made by The AP in many of the 50 states of the United States.

Lauren Easton, AP's vice president and director of media relations, said "AP continues to evaluate its global real estate footprint to better align our physical space with how we work today in a hybrid environment."

A Personal view:

It's been 57 years since a telephone call (landline), from Albany, offered me, my wife and our young daughter (later two), an opportunity to move from Poughkeepsie, NY, to Buffalo, NY, and to change my job from reading on the radio AP broadcast copy to that of reporting, writing, and editing AP stories for the readers of newspapers and the viewers and listeners of broadcast news.

It was a great career choice for the Morrissey clan that has been together for more than 61 years.

We served (worked) in Buffalo and Syracuse, NY, Montpelier, VT, Nashville, TN and at New York General Desk.

We also served at the Wire Service Guild and then at UPI during UPI's bankruptcy.

Throughout, in my mind, there were two key elements to success: competition that kept us awake and collegiality which kept each of us honest and on target.

The strength of The AP report was the cooperation between colleagues, reporters and editors, who shared responsibility for "the wire."

Closing an office shakes memories, but not much else.

But, if closing offices makes the AP a distributor of reports not subjected to the sharp eyes of seasoned colleagues, I think it will lead the report to the level of the ocean of cannon fodder that surrounds us.

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**George Walsh** - From Mike Hendricks' ALB ode to news Gannett is dropping The AP and closing the Quincy (Mass.) Patriot Ledger office, Tuesday was a lot. My first paying gig as a reporter was at the family-owned Patriot Ledger while in grad school in 1977. My first staff job was covering education at a long-gone Gannett paper in New Rochelle, N.Y. My final job was as the last 'boss' in the ALB bureau. That administrative correspondent position was eliminated in 2016. When I joined AP Albany in 2006, we had 24 people between there and Buffalo. When I left there were eight. Both of the stalwart family-owned NY papers where I'd spent the middle of my career, along with the Buffalo News, had dropped out as members. I don't need to dwell on everything the public good and democracy has lost. But here's one reminder. In the late '90s ALB bureau chief Lew Wheaton led a consortium of the state's newspapers on a mission to digitize state campaign finance records. New York government didn't make the data accessible and searchable. So a consultant paid through the consortium did the work. Papers kicked in money pro-rated by circulation and we all got the database to mine



for stories of local or state interest. I did the digging at the Schenectady paper and remain proud of what we collectively reported. Lew, who I first met during member visits, worked without fanfare to help build a remarkable collaboration. The AP and members at their best.

## New-member profile: Chuck Wolfe

**Chuck Wolfe** - I had 28 very memorable and fulfilling years with the AP, beginning in the spring of 1976 in the Charlotte bureau and concluding in the summer of 2004 in the Capitol bureau at Frankfort. In between were stints in Raleigh and Lexington, both with heavy sports responsibilities.

But my first AP job was as the summer relief staffer in CN — Charleston, West Virginia — in 1975. It was the most fun I ever had at AP. West Virginia in 1975 was an absolute gusher of news. Formidable staff, led by news editor Roger Petterson, later of NY GEN. We were on the aaa all the time. Mostly night broadcast, as one would expect, but also had assignments tossed my way that got me hooked on wire service work. One night, NY GEN topped the PMs digest with a story I'd written about a United Mine Workers strike, and for which I also filed audio reports for AP Radio. Heady stuff for the relief staffer!

Changed careers in 2004, going into state government public affairs. Spent a while as speech writer for then-Gov. Ernie Fletcher but most of my 15 years in state government was as public affairs director for the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.

Personal: Army, March '68 to Nov '71. B.A., University of Kentucky 1975. Married to wife Susan since 1977. Sons Zachary and Thomas. Three grandkids: Harvey, 7; Lenora, 3, and Liam 2.

Random remembrance: When appointed Lexington correspondent in 1977, drafted my stories on an Adler manual typewriter, pencil edited, then punched onto paper tape that a huge machine transmitted as copy to the Louisville bureau for final editing and then on to an operator in Columbus. Later given a Hendrix CRT that had been discarded in CN. Prone to overheating and susceptible to static electricity. Greatest tech day of my life was the day Frankfort got Nokia PCs. What work horses! Impervious to static.



## Academy To Restore '20 Days In Mariupol's Win To Shortened Version Of Oscar Show

# Sent To Global Broadcasters After Ukraine Outrage Over Omission

By Matthew Carey  
Deadline

EXCLUSIVE: The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences plans to recut the 90-minute version of the Oscars broadcast it provided to international licensees, Deadline has learned, in order to restore a key moment it had left out of the original package: the Best Documentary Feature category won by the Ukraine war-themed film *20 Days in Mariupol*.

Deadline has learned the move comes after Suspilne TV, the broadcaster that holds rights to air the Oscar show in Ukraine, protested the omission of the category from the 90-minute version, saying it was “shocked and deeply disappointed” by the decision that also left the moving acceptance speech by Ukrainian filmmaker Mstyslav Chernov on the cutting-room floor.

In that speech, Chernov mourned the devastating loss of civilian life that has resulted from Russia’s invasion and urged the film community to ensure “the history record is set straight, and that the truth will prevail and that the people of Mariupol and those who have given their lives will never be forgotten.”

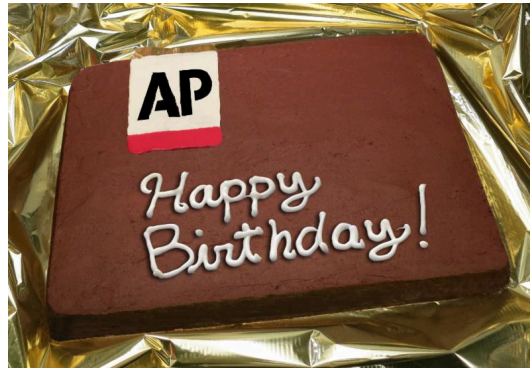
Read more [here](#). Shared by Peggy Walsh.

## Chinese country life



Zhang Wanli, the wife of retired AP newsman Patrick Casey, took this shot of two villagers talking during her recent trip to rural Yunnan Province in southern China.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Giovanna Dell'Orto](#)

[Larry Margasak](#)

## Stories of interest

### *Drone footage raises questions about Israeli justification for deadly strike on Gaza journalists*

(Washington Post)

By Louisa Loveluck, Imogen Piper, Sarah Cahlan, Hajar Harb and Hazem Balousha

JERUSALEM — On Jan. 7, the Israeli military conducted a targeted missile strike on a car carrying four Palestinian journalists outside Khan Younis, in southern Gaza.

Two members of an Al Jazeera crew — Hamza Dahdouh, 27, and drone operator Mustafa Thuraya, 30 — were killed, along with their driver. Two freelance journalists were seriously wounded.

They were returning from the scene of an earlier Israeli strike on a building, where they had used a drone to capture the aftermath. The drone — a consumer model available at Best Buy — would be central to the Israeli justification for the strike.

The Israel Defense Forces said in a statement the next day it had “identified and struck a terrorist who operated an aircraft that posed a threat to IDF troops.” Two days later, the military announced that it had uncovered evidence that both men belonged to militant groups — Thuraya to Hamas and Dahdouh to Palestinian Islamic Jihad, its smaller rival in Gaza — and that the attack had been in response to an “immediate” threat.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen, Michael Rubin.

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## ***Trump laments \$464M judgment, sues ABC News and George Stephanopoulos for defamation*** ((Politico))

Story by Andrew Howard

Donald Trump on Tuesday posted a string of complaints lamenting the "practically impossible" \$464 million he is unable to obtain a bond for in the civil fraud judgment against him, the day after hitting ABC News and George Stephanopoulos with a defamation lawsuit for an undisclosed sum.

The former president's lawyers said in a Monday court filing that "ongoing diligent efforts have proven that a bond in the judgment's full amount is a 'practical impossibility,'" including "approaching about 30 surety companies through 4 separate brokers." Trump's inability to pay raises the possibility that the state attorney general's office could begin to seize his assets unless the court agrees to halt the judgment while the former president appeals the verdict.

On Tuesday morning, Trump called the civil fraud case "legal warfare" and "election interference" in a series of Truth Social posts.

"Judge Engoron actually wants me to put up Hundreds of Millions of Dollars for the Right to Appeal his ridiculous decision," Trump wrote. "... I would be forced to mortgage or sell Great Assets, perhaps at Fire Sale prices, and if and when I win the Appeal, they would be gone. Does that make sense? WITCH HUNT. ELECTION INTERFERENCE!"

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

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## ***One Way to Help a Journalism Industry in Crisis: Make J-School Free*** (New York Times)

By Graciela Mochkofsky

*Ms. Mochkofsky is the dean at CUNY's Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism.*

Many uncertainties haunt the field of journalism today — among them, how we can reach our audience, build public trust in our work, and who is going to pay for it all. But one thing is certain: as complicated and dark as the world looks today, it would be much worse if journalists were not there to report on it.

Research shows that towns that have lost sources of local news tend to suffer from lower voter turnout, less civic engagement and more government corruption. Journalists are essential just as nurses and firefighters and doctors are essential.

And to continue to have journalists, we need to make their journalism education free.

This might sound counterintuitive given the state of the industry. Shrinking revenue and decreasing subscription figures have led to a record number of newsroom jobs lost. Much of the local news industry has fallen into the hands of hedge funds focused on squeezing the last drops of revenue out of operations by decimating them. Billionaires who appeared as saviors just a few years ago have grown tired of losing money on the media organizations they bought. Public trust in the value of news is at historical lows, while a growing percentage of people are avoiding the news altogether.

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

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## ***A newspaper says video of Prince William and Kate should halt royal rumor mill. That's a tall order*** (AP)

BY JILL LAWLESS AND SYLVIA HUI

LONDON (AP) — The late Queen Elizabeth II used to say that the royal family has to be seen to be believed.

That became glaringly evident as the absence of Kate, the Princess of Wales, from public view unleashed an escalating frenzy of wild speculation, skepticism and flat-out conspiracy theories fueled by online armchair detectives.

It's unlikely to let up even though Kate and husband Prince William have reportedly been filmed at a farm shop near their Windsor home — the first footage of the 42-year-old princess since she had abdominal surgery for an unspecified condition two months ago.

The Sun newspaper plastered its front page with “Great to see you again, Kate!” and said it had decided to publish the footage “in a bid to bring an end to what the Palace has called the ‘madness of social media.’”

Read more [here](#).

## **Today in History - March 20, 2024**



**Today is Wednesday, March 20, the 80th day of 2024. There are 286 days left in the year.**

**Today's Highlight in History:**

On March 20, 1996, a jury in Los Angeles convicted Erik and Lyle Menendez of first-degree murder in the shotgun slayings of their wealthy parents. (They were sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.)

**On this date:**

In 1413, England's King Henry IV died; he was succeeded by Henry V.

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte returned to Paris after escaping his exile on Elba, beginning his "Hundred Days" rule.

In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe's influential novel about slavery, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was first published in book form after being serialized.

In 1854, the Republican Party of the United States was founded by slavery opponents at a schoolhouse in Ripon, Wisconsin.

In 1922, the decommissioned USS Jupiter, converted into the first U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, was recommissioned as the USS Langley.

In 1952, the U.S. Senate ratified, 66-10, a Security Treaty with Japan.

In 1969, John Lennon married Yoko Ono in Gibraltar.

In 1976, kidnapped newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst was convicted of armed robbery for her part in a San Francisco bank holdup carried out by the Symbionese Liberation Army. (Hearst was sentenced to seven years in prison; she was released after serving 22 months, and was pardoned in 2001 by President Bill Clinton.)

In 1995, in Tokyo, 12 people were killed, more than 5,500 others sickened when packages containing the deadly chemical sarin were leaked on five separate subway trains by Aum Shinrikyo cult members.

In 2013, making his first visit to Israel since taking office, President Barack Obama affirmed Israel's sovereign right to defend itself from any threat and vowed to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

In 2014, President Barack Obama ordered economic sanctions against nearly two dozen members of Russian President Vladimir Putin's inner circle and a major bank that provided them support, raising the stakes in an East-West showdown over Ukraine.

In 2017, U.S. Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch pledged to be independent or "hang up the robe" as the Senate began confirmation hearings on President Donald Trump's conservative pick for the nation's highest bench.

In 2018, in a phone call to Vladimir Putin, President Donald Trump offered congratulations on Putin's re-election victory; a senior official said Trump had been warned in briefing materials that he should not congratulate Putin.

In 2020, the governor of Illinois ordered residents to remain in their homes except for essential needs, joining similar efforts in California and New York to limit the spread of the coronavirus. Stocks tumbled again on Wall Street, ending their worst week since the 2008 financial crisis; the Dow fell more than 900 points to end the week with a 17% loss.

In 2022, Ukrainian authorities said Russia's military bombed an art school sheltering about 400 people in the port city of Mariupol, where refugees described how "battles took place over every street," weeks into a devastating siege.

In 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin welcomed Chinese leader Xi Jinping to the Kremlin, sending a powerful message to Western leaders that their efforts to isolate Moscow over the fighting in Ukraine have fallen short.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Hal Linden is 93. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Pat Riley is 79. Country singer-musician Ranger Doug (Riders in the Sky) is 78. Hockey Hall of Famer Bobby Orr is 76. Blues singer-musician Marcia Ball is 75. Rock musician Carl Palmer (Emerson, Lake and Palmer) is 74. Rock musician Jimmie Vaughan is 73. Actor Amy Aquino is 67. Movie director Spike Lee is 67. Actor Theresa Russell is 67. Actor Vanessa Bell Calloway is 67. Actor Holly Hunter is 66. Rock musician Slim Jim Phantom (The Stray Cats) is 63. Actor-model-designer Kathy Ireland is 61. Actor David Thewlis is 61. Rock musician Adrian Oxaal (James) is 59. Actor Jessica Lundy is 58. Actor Liza Snyder is 56. Actor Michael Rapaport is 54. Actor Alexander Chaplin is 53. Actor Cedric Yarbrough is 51. Actor Paula Garcés is 50. Actor Bianca Lawson is 45. Comedian-actor Mikey Day is 44. Actor Nick Blood (TV: "Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.") is 42. Rock musician Nick Wheeler (The All-American Rejects) is 42. Actor Michael Cassidy is 41. Actor-singer Christy Carlson Romano is 40. Actor Ruby Rose is 38. Actor Barrett Doss 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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