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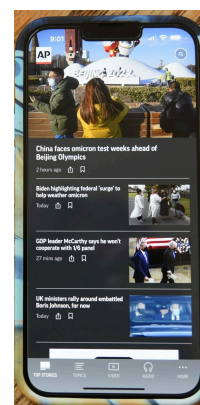
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Connecting

March 22, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this March 22, 2024,

Today's Connecting brings more on the announcement by Gannett and McClatchy that they will drop Associated Press service at the end of the month – although both are under contract with the AP through the rest of the year.

A Washington Post story delves into the impact their decision could have on readers of the publications by the two groups. And we hear more from our colleagues with their reaction.

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

Paul

Two major newspaper chains dropped the AP. What will it mean for readers?

Story by Laura Wagner
The Washington Post

Since the Mexican-American War of 1846, newspapers large and small have turned to the Associated Press for reporting from places inaccessible to their own reporters.

With more than 200 bureaus around the globe, the AP remains the biggest brand name among what came to be known as the wire services, transmitting its articles and images to news outlets for a licensing fee. Some smaller papers came to rely so heavily on its content that “AP” was their single most frequent byline.

But now, two major American newspaper chains have said they will no longer use the AP for news. Gannett, the publisher of USA Today and more than 200 local newspapers, and McClatchy, which publishes the Miami Herald and Kansas City Star among more than two dozen other newspapers, said this week that they were ending their content relationship with the AP.

In memos to staff and public statements, executives with both companies described it as a cost-saving move — in the “millions” of dollars, according to McClatchy brass — and said they will have no trouble filling the news gap.

“We create more journalism every day than the AP,” Gannett executive Kristin Roberts said in a Tuesday memo obtained by the Wrap.

But some media observers — including staff members at the affected newspapers — warned that the decision will cut off a vital source of reliable reporting that their readers have come to depend on.

“It’s a loss,” Ilana Keller, a content planner and reporter at the Gannett-owned Asbury Park Press in New Jersey, told The Washington Post. “As our reporting staff got smaller and smaller, we relied more on more on wire services to help fill in the gaps, and losing that is incredible.”

Margot Susca, an American University journalism professor and author of “Hedged: How Private Investment Funds Helped Destroy American Newspapers and Undermine Democracy,” said she is worried about what might now fill those pages.

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

More reax to Gannett/McClatchy

[Jim Spehar](#) - The news and subsequent discussion about Gannett and McClatchy leaving the AP fold bring to mind several things. One, least important, from my 10+ years as a broadcast executive is the love/hate relationship with member

cancellations. While we never wanted one of our broadcast members to leave, it also offered the opportunity to make a few extra bucks by renewing the contract.

It also reminded me of how things can change over time. When I began my 11-year stint as one of Roy Steinfort's "paid tourists" in the mid-1970s I was told newspapers accounted for about 75% of AP revenues while broadcasting and other ancillary projects brought in about 25 percent. I could gloat over the role reversal, but my days as a consumer member and as broadcast editor and writer in Denver taught me the importance of a wide net of print and broadcast members necessary to provide a comprehensive news report for readers, listeners and viewers. Therein lies the tragedy of losing 200+ newspaper members in one fell swoop.

Jim Hood's ponderings Thursday also reminded me of the vital steps he, under Roy's direction, took to revamp the broadcast report to evolve from what was easiest for AP, a rewrite of the print product and features, into something more useful and revenue-generating from a broadcaster's perspective. Having known Jim for 55-years beginning from our times trading stories as radio reporters in Tucson and Phoenix to working together in all-news radio and as AP staffers, I can think of no one more creative and qualified to oversee that much-needed transformation, shepherd AP radio after its startup phase under Bob Benson and help create a path for still-evolving video efforts.

But the first thing I thought of was a conversation with my son about 15 years ago. After two years of film school and a year off working in the production department of his hometown NBC affiliate, he announced one day that he wanted to go back to school and become a TV journalist. I gulped and thought for a while after he said he wanted to be a reporter or news anchor as I had once been. I reminded him of the evolution of the news business during my own time, then offered this advice.

"The delivery of news will change and those jobs may not always be there," I said. "But if you approach it with the idea that people will always be curious and you'll be there to answer their questions, whatever that takes, you can make it a career." Tony graduated with honors from Arizona State's Walter Cronkite School and is now shooting and editing video for the CBS/Paramount-owned station in Denver after journeyman stops in South Bend, Colorado Springs, another Denver station, Salt Lake City and Albuquerque.

Change can be difficult but evolution is necessary. My first on-air hostings of a student-produced TV show while I was at Arizona State in the mid-1960s, including an appearance pre-Chicago anchorman days of fellow student Bob Petty as a black Santa Claus and on-camera body painting of a Playboy Bunny, are preserved out in the garage somewhere, saved on two-inch videotape that could only be played if there was still an operating reel-to-reel machine in a museum. I find myself puzzled at some of the emerging AP offerings such as product sales but also comforted by knowing its current leaders are still doing "whatever it takes."

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ENGLISH

Opinion | USA: Gannett and McClatchy to drop The Associated Press. What does that mean? (Poynter)

USA: Gannett closing local newsrooms in latest cost-cutting measure (Boston-com)



[Doug Fisher](#) - Interesting juxtaposition in Thursday's WAN-IFRA news roundup (see screenshot).

The headline could be misleading in a quick read. Gannett isn't laying off people or cutting coverage (for now). It's doing away with physical newsrooms. Still, a most interesting pair of heds.

Click [here](#) for the story.

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[Tammalene Mitman](#) - My husband, Jon Kellogg, used to tell me that the AP would only ever be as good as newspaper publishers wanted it to be.

I think he meant that the AP was a creature of the newspaper industry. Publishers would always rule the wire service's future.

According to this week's news about Gannett and McClatchy, publishers no longer think the AP is necessary. Which just plain hurts.

But for me, it also begs a question — if these chains are large enough to be their own wire service, why the heck don't they serve their own online ads? And is it too late for the AP to play a larger role in the cooperative ad revenue picture?

I'll explain. I need to start with some background, though.

One of the tasks I had in my first news job was to build a file (I'm talking manila paper folders here) for every daily newspaper and every radio and TV station in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

Jon was then the AP's Northern New England bureau chief. I was the confidential secretary. We worked in the hub bureau, nestled in the attic of the Concord Monitor, right down the street from the YMCA and the Statehouse.

In that era I learned about the worldwide circulation system of news. I watched and listened as the bureau's reporters, editors and photographers worked and argued and laughed. I took calls from members throughout the territory.

I became a true believer in the necessity of timely and accurate news and a lifelong adherent of the cooperative membership news model.

Later, when I worked as a summer relief reporter for the Monitor and then as the paper's wire editor, I reveled in being an AP member. And I loved newspapers.

When I went back to school to study for an MBA, I focused on the newspaper business. (I didn't finish the degree, but that's a story for another day.)

I remember writing a paper about the profitability of the newspaper business model, its high barrier to entry, its near monopoly on advertising revenue. The company that owned the Boston Globe, I wrote, paid for its new printing plant with retained earnings — with its profits.

Eventually, Jon and I moved to Maine and from there to Massachusetts.

There, I edited a couple of weeklies for a company that had bought up newspapers around greater Boston. It was a gamble by the owner, a financial investment company, to create an easy ad buy — one stop purchasing — pick your properties, supply a creative and your ad would be put into play, region-wide. It was an interesting business model, but I think the details of making it work among papers of different sizes, designs and deadlines was quite challenging.

In the digital world, though, those challenges of press and paper went away.

When I left that editing job, I worked in customer support for one of the first internet ad networks. We were early contemporaries of DoubleClick. We had some brilliant developers and a small crew of professional sales folks who recruited a bunch of mid-size websites that were big enough to have ad inventory but too small to afford their own advertising software.

One of my jobs was to look at client websites and tell their owners where to insert the line of code that would pull an ad from our server. It was just like paid-position ad placement in a daily. We'd use a line of code that would draw a sports ad for sports websites, for example. A car ad for a car retail site.

One of our sister start-ups had another goal — to deliver news that individuals wanted directly to them. I thought that those two business models would doom the newspaper industry, smashing its high barrier to entry, splintering its ad revenue. And that was without even considering social media, which hardly existed back then.

Well. We used to say that when the eyeballs moved to the web, ad dollars would follow. And so they have.

But here's the thing. Google and Facebook and the other data aggregators selling ad space can talk all they want about matching your ad with the person most likely to buy your product, but the fact remains that paid position advertising still works. And if you use it, you can use it without tracking people into their living rooms.

There is no reason why Gannett or McClatchy or all AP members couldn't collectively form one ad agency that sells digital ad space based on content.

I really wish someone out there would hire a couple of smart developers and get cracking on writing that code. Because I think there's revenue to be had there, money to be diverted from the social media giants. Particularly if the project is coupled with a marketing campaign that points out that the ads are strictly sold based on content — and not on your personal behavior.

I may be wrong. I'm probably wrong. But geez, I wish the AP would just try it! Because then, it could be the umbrella that shelters what's left of the newspaper industry.

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Lyle Price - I have been thinking through the reported comment by a McClatchy Newspapers' high-up that fewer than 1 percent of their circulation examines AP content for which it pays millions. In that spirit, I studied three recent copies today of the Tacoma News Tribune which is printed about 25 miles from me in Tacoma, Wash. It is in the county next to the one where I live so I read the Seattle Times which is published about a dozen miles from me. I scanned the Tacoma editions at a local library, fyi.

The front-page content of the four Tacoma editions was approximately: 1/3 AP on 4 March and 5 March, and 10 percent on 6 March. In all cases but one the AP story was at the top of the page. There were AP stories on many and perhaps most of the other pages. Most of the P 1 AP reports were jumped at substantial length onto inside pages. All of the AP Page 1 stories were arguably the top-breaking stories of the day. In other words, AP outclassed the competition that this McClatchy paper got from its other wire services, which include the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times. Those services were cited with bylines, BTW, is how I know that.

It strikes me as unlikely to think that only one percent of the Tacoma readers actually bothered to read those AP stories -- and the many more AP bylined stuff throughout the pages of the News Tribune. I wonder if an examination of other McClatchy papers wouldn't produce similar results. In fact, I wonder how extensive the McClatchy survey might have been or if perhaps guesswork was involved.

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Dave Tomlin - I wish I could believe that money saved by cancelling AP or other news services would really be used to beef up local news gathering. But here in Ruidoso NM, that's not the way things have played out. All that's left of the twice-weekly Ruidoso News is the name plate. There's no local staff or office any more. The content is reprints of items from other Gannett papers.

I've been thinking of trying to gin up an online newsletter with some basic coverage of local government, cops and schools. Just this week I had the idea of applying for startup money from the Gannett Foundation and offering to license our content free to Gannett for reprint in the News. It seemed like a win-win. I submitted my proposal on the Gannett corpcomm email utility. I got my answer in less than five minutes, a two-liner in a chipper, anodyne tone I've come to associate with chatbot prose:

“ Hi David –

Thank you for reaching out and sharing your background. While Gannett is not able to provide support, we wish you the best of luck on the launch of your newsletter.”

Some thoughts about the Albany buro

Joyce Rosenberg - My five years in the New York City buro from 1981 to 1986 included continual contact with the staff in the Albany buro in Colonie and the Capitol buro. The list of great journalists, and I don't toss those words around lightly, that Mike Hendricks wrote of included many of the people who I worked with during that time, or who I was lucky enough to work with in other assignments. Those five years have given me friendship and affection that have lasted to this day.

One of those friends is Joel Stashenko. I visited Joel and his wife Claudia Hutton many times, and was lucky and honored to be included in parties with buro staffers as well as Mike and COB Lew Wheaton. The regard and respect they had for each other was palpable.

I so understand the financial demands that keep leading to physical buros being closed. I hope staffers are able to form and nurture the kind of professional and personal bonds that I saw and felt in the Albany buro.

Victoria Eastwood named Middle East news director

By Nicole Meir

In a memo to staff on Thursday, Vice President and Head of Global News Gathering Paul Haven announced that Victoria Eastwood will join AP as the new Middle East news director, based in Cairo:

Victoria comes to us from CNN, where she is senior director of coverage based in Asia, overseeing major breaking news outside the U.S. in her hours, and driving coverage and investigations in the region. She is a tremendously ambitious news leader well-versed in leading teams on a global level for a multiplatform audience, and she has extensive experience working on assignments in the Middle East.

She has worked as a field producer covering major stories in Iraq, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Libya and Ukraine. As Nic Robertson's producer Victoria worked in Libya following the fall of Moammar Gadhafi, in Baghdad she covered the rise of ISIS, and has had several stints working in Jerusalem and covered the 2014 Israel-Hamas war.

Victoria has a digital-first approach to coverage that aligns with one of AP's main news priorities. She is well-versed in working across formats and on packaging elements of

a story in ways that engage audiences – something more important than ever in the Middle East and everywhere for the AP.

Prior to her current role in Hong Kong, Victoria was based in London for CNN planning coverage of Europe, the Middle East and Africa. She began at CNN as a producer based in South Africa. Before that she worked for Al Jazeera English in London, and spent five years in various roles for ITN's Channel 4 News. She started out at BBC Radio 4.

Victoria has won two Emmys. In 2022 her team won Outstanding Hard News Feature Story about a 9-year-old girl sold into child marriage in Afghanistan. In 2020 Victoria won an Emmy for Breaking News coverage of Turkey's incursion into Syria. The same year she and her team won the prestigious Royal Television Society award for Breaking News coverage of the protests in Hong Kong.



Even as she has led excellence in news coverage, she has always made a priority of mentoring staff and supporting their career growth. This is also a continuing priority for us — particularly in the Middle East, where we have so many talented and dedicated colleagues.

This is of course a bittersweet announcement, as it also means we will soon be saying farewell to Karin Laub, a true AP institution who has given four decades of excellence and energy to the news cooperative (and continues to contribute every day with her deft oversight of the Israel-Hamas war). Karin steps down on April 30, and we will be looking for opportunities to celebrate her career in the weeks ahead.

Victoria will be joining us in July.

Please join me in welcoming Victoria to the AP!

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

40 years later: Bon voyage from Miami



Former Texas AP and BNC staffer Amanda Barnett (left) of the Atlanta area and Dallas AP retiree Diana Heidgerd stopped in Key West, Florida, on March 14, 2024, aboard the Norwegian Pearl as part of The Broadway Cruise from Miami.

Diana Heidgerd - A dream that began for me more than 40 years ago, as a newbie Associated Press staffer in Florida, recently came true.

I finally cruised from Miami.

AP came calling in 1983 when I was working in radio in Grand Island, Nebraska. The station manager shook my courage a bit when he told me I was making a big mistake moving to Miami (a young Midwestern gal alone in such a far-away big city) and promised that I could have my old job back if AP didn't work out.

So I threw my belongings into my two-door hatchback, drove to South Florida and joined the global news organization.

My usual midweek days off didn't afford much opportunity for a social life. I began exploring and came upon a park off a causeway near the sprawling Port of Miami.

I'd get a copy of the Miami Herald, plop down on a bench and read the newspaper while watching (in awe) as those massive cruise ships maneuvered in and out of port. For some reason it gave me comfort, being so far away from the prairie of my native South Dakota, to spend time along the water near those beautiful big ships.

I moved to Texas as AP broadcast editor in 1985, retired in 2019 and still live in Dallas (with Paul, my husband of nearly 28 years).

But I never forgot the promise that I made to myself, all those decades ago, to someday return to Miami for a real cruise exploring the Caribbean & beyond.

Amanda Barnett, a former Texas AP & BNC staffer who now lives in the Atlanta area, joined me this month on The Broadway Cruise from Miami to Key West and Grand Cayman, then back (weirdly intriguing to sail so close to Cuba). Here's more on the journey: [The Broadway Cruise - March 31 - April 4, 2025](#)

And in case you're wondering, I did see "my" favorite Miami park again – but this time it was from afar while on the deck of the Norwegian Pearl as we set sail March 13.

Amen.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Jerry Harkavy](#)

[Stan Miller](#)

On Saturday to...

[Joe Macenka](#)

[Marjorie Miller](#)

Stories of interest

Grondahl: Restoring Vietnam War images of acclaimed TU photographer Bernie Kolenberg (Times Union)



Restored image of two orphaned children in Vietnam from Bernie Kolenberg's "Faces of Vietnam" 1965 exhibit in Albany. Photo courtesy of the Kolenberg family and restored by John Bulmer

By Paul Grondahl

ALBANY — Pixel by pixel, photographer John Bulmer painstakingly restored the technical mastery and deep humanity of the black-and-white Vietnam War images of acclaimed Times Union photographer Bernie Kolenberg.

"I did this as a service to Bernie, an extraordinary photographer who sacrificed everything for his art," said Bulmer, 51, of Saratoga Springs.

Kolenberg, a 38-year-old Troy native, died Oct. 2, 1965, in Vietnam. He was the first American journalist killed in action covering the war. He took a five-week leave from the Times Union and sold his wooden motor boat to pay his way to Vietnam to work as a freelance photojournalist for the first time in the spring of 1965.

He strode into the war zone with his two Leica M3 cameras and the passion with which he raced to cover fires, crashes and explosions as the Times Union's ace photographer. He rose from the paper's bottom rung of copyboy to the revered level of a so-called "Page One Man," a staff photographer whose powerful images were routinely displayed on the front page.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Chris Carola.

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Opinion | First in Poynter: A new podcast looks into how Pulitzer Prize-winning stories are done

By: Tom Jones

Want a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at how Pulitzer Prize-winning stories come together, what makes them special, and how they become award-winning?

Well, here's a podcast for you.

Starting Monday, the Pulitzer Prizes will launch a six-episode series called "Pulitzer on the Road." It will release a new episode each week and will feature 2023 winners in Journalism and Books in conversations with members of the Pulitzer Board.

Guests over the course of the series include Fiction winners Barbara Kingsolver and Hernan Diaz, Explanatory Reporting winner Caitlin Dickerson of The Atlantic, Local Reporting winners John Archibald and Ashley Remkus from AL.com, and Public Service named contributor Mstyslav Chernov of the team at The Associated Press.

"'Pulitzer on the Road' is an effort to offer audiences insights into how these works are produced and what makes them prize-worthy," Pulitzer Prize administrator Marjorie Miller said. "We want to show how journalism and the arts play important roles in democracy."

It sounds like a podcast of interest to both those inside and outside of journalism.

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - March 22, 2024



Today is Friday, March 22, the 82nd day of 2024. There are 284 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 22, 2019, former President Jimmy Carter became the longest-living chief executive in American history; at 94 years and 172 days, he exceeded the lifespan of the late former President George H.W. Bush.

On this date:

In 1765, the British Parliament passed the Stamp Act to raise money from the American colonies, which fiercely resisted the tax. (The Stamp Act was repealed a year later.)

In 1882, President Chester A. Arthur signed a measure outlawing polygamy.

In 1894, hockey's first Stanley Cup championship game was played; home team Montreal Hockey Club defeated Ottawa Hockey Club, 3-1.

In 1941, the Grand Coulee hydroelectric dam in Washington state officially went into operation.

In 1945, the Arab League was formed with the adoption of a charter in Cairo, Egypt.

In 1963, The Beatles' debut album, "Please Please Me," was released in the United Kingdom by Parlophone.

In 1978, Karl Wallenda, the 73-year-old patriarch of "The Flying Wallendas" high-wire act, fell to his death while attempting to walk a cable strung between two hotel towers in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

In 1988, both houses of Congress overrode President Ronald Reagan's veto of the Civil Rights Restoration Act.

In 1993, Intel Corp. unveiled the original Pentium computer chip.

In 1997, Tara Lipinski, at age 14 years and 10 months, became the youngest ladies' world figure skating champion in Lausanne, Switzerland.

In 2010, Google Inc. stopped censoring the internet for China by shifting its search engine off the mainland to Hong Kong.

In 2012, coroner's officials ruled singer Whitney Houston died by drowning, but that heart disease and cocaine use were contributing factors.

In 2017, a knife-wielding man plowed a car into pedestrians on London's Westminster Bridge, killing four people, then stabbed an armed police officer to death inside the gates of Parliament before being shot dead by authorities.

In 2020, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo ordered all nonessential businesses in the state to close and nonessential workers to stay home. Kentucky Republican Rand Paul became the first member of the U.S. Senate to report testing positive for the coronavirus; his announcement led Utah senators Mike Lee and Mitt Romney to place themselves in quarantine.

Today's Birthdays: Actor William Shatner is 93. Actor M. Emmet Walsh is 89. Actor-singer Jeremy Clyde is 83. Singer-guitarist George Benson is 81. Writer James Patterson is 77. CNN newscaster Wolf Blitzer is 76. Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber is 76. Actor Fanny Ardant is 75. Sportscaster Bob Costas is 72. Country singer James House is 69. Actor Lena Olin is 69. Singer-actor Stephanie Mills is 67. Actor Matthew Modine is 65. Actor-comedian Keegan-Michael Key is 53. Actor Will Yun Lee is 53. Olympic silver medal figure skater Elvis Stojko (STOY'-koh) is 52. Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Calif., is 51. Actor Guillermo Diaz is 49. Actor Anne Dudek is 48. Actor Cole Hauser is 49. Actor Kellie Williams is 48. Actor Reese Witherspoon is 48. Rock musician John Otto (Limp Bizkit) is 47. Actor Tiffany Dupont is 43. Rapper Mims is 43. Actor Constance Wu is 42. Actor James Wolk is 39.

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.

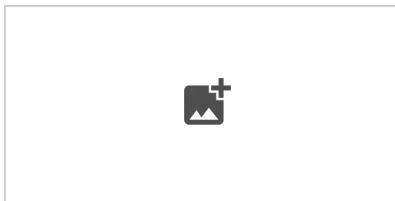
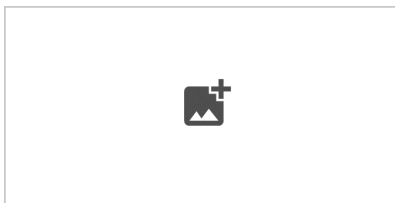
Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!



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
Editor, Connecting newsletter
paulstevens46@gmail.com



Connecting newsletter | 14719 W 79th Ter, Lenexa, KS 66215

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