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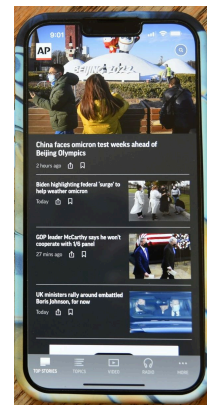
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Connecting

April 18, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this April 18, 2024,

Our colleague **Linda Deutsch** says that if she had been on the jury in O.J. Simpson’s double murder trial, she would have voted to acquit him. “The evidence wasn’t there – the case wasn’t proven,” she said in [an interview](#) with the Hollywood Reporter.

Does she believe he was guilty? The retired AP special correspondent, one of the top trial reporters of our time, told Connecting, “I never made a decision about OJ’s guilt or innocence. It was not my job.”

Deutsch, who covered the trial for The Associated Press, talks about the value of objectivity in our lead story for today’s issue and offers this closing anecdote: “One day, when I was giving a pool report to camera crews in the lobby of the courthouse, defense attorney Robert Shapiro who wanted to convey opinions about the jury candidates’ answers, took over my microphone and declared, ‘This reporter is being too objective.’”

She took it “as a badge of honor.”

Today’s issue brings first response to Connecting’s call for thoughts on the new movie “Civil War” and the reaction of two colleagues who covered former Florida Gov. Bob Graham, who died Tuesday.

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

Paul

The value of objectivity

[Linda Deutsch](#) - I can’t resist adding just a few final comments on my coverage of the OJ Simpson trials (all three of them).

In my multiple interviews with over a dozen news outlets the day that OJ died, I found myself having to remind some interviewers that Simpson was acquitted of the murders of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman. And he was never tried for the crimes again. The civil trial that focused on claims brought by the Goldman and Brown families did not address the state charges of murder nor did it require proof beyond a reasonable doubt. The jury found him liable for the deaths and assessed damages of \$33.5 million. Most of it was never paid.



In spite of the not guilty verdicts, there are those who believe to this day that OJ committed the crimes. Some of them are journalists. I find that distressing because it flies in the face of our role in the justice system. After a yearlong trial in which jurors heard marathon testimony and viewed tons of evidence, many who watched the televised trial have decided they know better than the jury and came to their own conclusions.

I have often said that after watching every day of the first trial, I agreed with the jury that OJ should be acquitted. That was not because I had decided he was innocent. It was because the LAPD had messed up the physical evidence so badly that it was not reliable.

How could one forget a homicide detective putting a vial of OJ’s blood in his jacket pocket and carrying it around unsecured all day. How could one forget a forensic analyst placing evidence in an un-air conditioned truck on a blistering hot day. And then there was the glove, a piece of evidence vouched for by a racist homicide detective who was the prosecution’s key witness. He swore he had never used the “N”

word and then jurors heard his tape-recorded invective, using the hateful word over and over.



Pool photo by Vince Bucci via AP

When a prosecutor asked OJ to try on the gloves, everyone in the courtroom saw they did not fit him and Attorney Johnnie Cochran coined the unforgettable line: “If it doesn’t fit, you must acquit.” Tugging at the gloves, OJ spoke the only three words he uttered in the trial, “They’re too small.” It seemed more than possible that Mark Fuhrman, the disgraced detective, had planted the gloves.

I never made a decision about OJ’s guilt or innocence. It was not my job. But as an observer, I could see where the trial was going. Unlike my AP colleague Bran Bland who wrote in Connecting about reporters shouting negative opinions in the press room, I had my own office in the criminal courts building several floors away from the opinionated crowd in the other press room. I was able to focus on the facts. One day as the jury was about to begin deliberations, the chief prosecutor Marcia Clark came up to my office and asked me a question I never forgot: “Do you think we even have a chance?” I answered: “Your only chance is if you get a hung jury.”

On Oct. 3, 1995, a jury which deliberated for only three hours found O.J. Simpson not guilty of the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. But the story would continue for many years.

Celebrities who are charged with major crimes are perceived as being luckier than most defendants because they can afford to hire top-notch lawyers. I hold a different view. Most of the celebrities who are found not guilty stand no chance of being

acquitted in the public mind. When actor Robert Blake died last year, I received many calls from people asking me, "Is he still in prison for killing his wife?" Um, no, I replied. He was acquitted and never went to prison. Again, there was a second civil trial and that jury assessed damages in the exact same amount as Simpson's jury did. They seemed to think that was the thing to do even though there was little similarity in the cases.

How many people remember that Michael Jackson was acquitted of child molestation? Or that John DeLorean was found not guilty of cocaine distribution charges? The colorful facts of these trials loom large. The outcomes, not so much.

After the murder trial, Simpson contacted me to thank me for being fair to him in my coverage. Jackson later did the same thing. For years, OJ was my constant contact. If I had to check out developments in his life, I called him. If he wanted to answer stories on the wire, he called me. He loved to talk, and every conversation yielded a story. I sometimes thought that if he had done it, he would have told someone. He just loved to talk so much. I asked him the big question many times in many ways, and he was adamant in his reply that he did not commit those murders.

Why did he talk to me and no one else? He often called me "the friend of the acquitted." But he gave a clear explanation when Editor and Publisher Magazine did a story about my unusual access to him. They asked him the question in a phone interview. His answer was clear: "She never said I didn't do it, but she never said I did it either. And that's why I talk to her."

Again, I never made a decision about his guilt or innocence. It was not my job. I was the pool reporter for jury selection and part of a larger pool for the visit to OJ's home. I told everyone what I had seen and they trusted me.

One day, when I was giving a pool report to camera crews in the lobby of the courthouse, defense attorney Robert Shapiro who wanted to convey opinions about the jury candidates' answers, took over my microphone and declared, "This reporter is being too objective."

I took it as a badge of honor. My objectivity had served me well and gave AP readers an untarnished view of The Trial of the Century from gavel to gavel.

Thoughts on movie 'Civil War'

[Hal Spencer](#) - My wife and I saw it yesterday at an early matinee. You can't beat popcorn and coke for lunch. I loved the top message. Reporters are the finest and most swashbuckling of Americans. We need it. I was also glad they were Reuters reporters since they were stupid enough to actually join fire teams in close gunfights with the enemy. I'm no war photographer but have been in war, and doubt that happens on purpose.

Overall, I had trouble with the specifics: The idea that marking yourself "Press" is almost always a ticket to safety, the ease of travel and communication when in real

life one would find basic obstacles - lack of fuel, food, water, and photo and text transmissions.

But the various scenes that evoked America's current flashpoints -- like who's a real American -- were well done and provocative.

The reviewers are insisting that the fictional President could be anybody. That's a laugh.

By the way, to get a better picture of what daily life might be like in a new civil war, read the book: Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri.

Memories of Bob Graham

Matt Bokor - Here are some memories of former Gov. Bob Graham from my AP-Florida days. I was based in Tallahassee and covered the 1979 train derailment in Crestview with Tallahassee photographer Mark Foley. Graham came over a few days later and I staffed his press conference outside the Okaloosa County Courthouse. (I bear no resemblance to the young me taking notes in the photo.) Graham's sense of humor shows in letters he sent me while I was Jacksonville correspondent (he mentions Tallahassee colleagues David Powell, Lorraine Cichowski and Bernie Daley) and later as Miami news editor. He was a great public servant.



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ABOVE: Governor Graham with the press corps softball team in the 1980s.

RIGHT: Graham looking at the photo with Bill Kaczor looking on.



Bill Kaczor - My last year with Gannett News Service and the first few years of my AP career could be called "Adventures with Bob Graham," the former Florida governor and ex-U.S. senator who passed away this week. Graham, half-brother of Washington Post publisher Phil Graham, cultivated a close relationship with the press, unlike many present-day politicians. An argument could be made that it was too close, but the Tallahassee press corps was a cynical bunch, once even labeling him "Governor Jell-O" early in his first term because he'd taken some wishy-washy positions, That was a sharp contrast with his predecessor, Reubin Askew, who knew exactly what he wanted and didn't hesitate to tell you so.

My first adventure with Bob was in 1979 when I was with GNS. It was a helicopter tour of damage caused by Hurricane Frederic in the Pensacola area. I wrote that the tour was "partly business and largely public relations." Graham's press secretary, Steve Hull, was in charge, and he bumped some public officials off the National Guard helicopters to make room for the news media. A state senator said he and other lawmakers were willing to remain grounded because it was more important for the public to receive information through the press.

I described our next adventure in a recent Connecting post about the 1980 Sunshine Skyway Bridge disaster just a couple months after I went to work for the AP. A few weeks later I was jetting to Miami to join Graham as he toured the riot-torn Liberty City community. Burning, looting and violence had erupted after an all-white jury acquitted four police officers in the death of a Black motorcyclist. A pair of Florida Department of Law Enforcement cars took us on the tour. Graham was in the lead car and I was in the second one. At one point someone threw a rock at our car. Graham stopped to walk through the rubble of a burned-out store as security agents urged him to be cautious of a twisted steel beam that hung precariously from the ceiling. Then he stopped at the Ernest R. Graham state office building, named for his late father, a state senator and unsuccessful gubernatorial candidate, to inspect damage caused by a firebomb.

I had made the trip on the spur of the moment, stopping long enough to buy some necessities -- toothbrush, underwear, etc. -- that I carried in a paper sack. At the end of the tour, Graham invited me to ride in his car because my hotel was on the way to his house. About five minutes into the ride, I blurted out that I'd forgotten my stuff in the other car, which had headed off in the opposite direction. Graham had the agents radio the second car to turn around and meet us at a gas station there in Liberty City. By this time, it was dark and I told Graham to the effect "never mind, let's get out of here," but he insisted. So there we were, sitting ducks waiting in the dark for a rendezvous with my bag of stuff that was worth only a few bucks. As I quoted one of the governor's security guards, "When you are in this area you are putting your life on the line." Fortunately, I got my bag without causing any harm to the governor.

One of Graham's public relations gimmicks was his "workdays." Throughout his campaign for governor and then from time to time while in office and later as a senator, the multimillionaire would work for a day in usually menial jobs such as picking tomatoes, collecting garbage and shoveling manure to show that he was a man of the people despite his wealth. The workdays were a success because they drew plenty of media coverage. My most memorable workday with Graham was in 1984 when we flew out to the USS Lexington, an aircraft carrier steaming in the Gulf of Mexico off Pensacola in a twin-engine Navy cargo plane. As I wrote in my lede, "Gov. Bob Graham arrived for his 169th 'workday' ... with a bone-jarring thud." The C-1A's tailhook caught a steel cable running across the carrier's flight deck that brought us to a dead stop from 95 mph in 200 feet. Graham then went to work steering the ship, slinging mashed potatoes and gravy in the mess and helping reset the arresting cables after landings.

Graham delighted in one-upping his friends in the news media. In another recent Connecting post I recalled how Graham appeared with Jimmy Buffett and his Coral Reefer Band at one of the "Sometimes Annual Capital Press Corp Skits" during which we poked fun at the politicians. Another year he dressed as a Banana Republic dictator complete with medals, sash, knee-high boots and a sword as he led the Florida A&M University Marching 100 on to the stage.

We got pretty tired of being upstaged, but we got even in 1983. I was president of the Tallahassee Press Club that year. My wife, Judy, and I sat at the head table with Graham and his wife, Adele, who told me she hoped we would be kind to him. Not a chance. I called the governor to the stage and announced that he had received a

telegram from Republican Sen. Paula Hawkins, who Graham was expected to run against the next year as he was term-limited. Instead of a telegram, a young woman clad in black leather and wielding a whip came on stage to deliver a "leathergram." Graham tried to protest, but his mic was cut off, so he just sat there as the leather lady gyrated and wrapped her whip around his neck and shoulders.

Graham also competed with the media on the playing fields. The press corps held its own in softball games, but the governor's office prevailed at our one and only flag football game. Graham had billed his pairing with running mate Wayne Mixon, a Panhandle farmer, as the Graham-Cracker Ticket. So, the press donned shirts emblazoned with the words "Cracker Sackers" for the football game. Graham was known for supporting women's equality and both teams were co-ed. In a bid to one-up Graham, we put women at every position on the field. That lasted for only one play. Can you say "pick six," boys and girls?

The last time I saw Graham was in 2018. We were both retired by then, but Graham was still busy advocating citizen involvement in public affairs. "Our democracy is in trouble," he said during a speaking engagement in Pensacola. "We need help, and that help is only going to come from us." After his talk, I gave him a photo that shows Graham with the press corps softball team back in the 1980s. One attached photo shows us together as Graham looks at the softball picture that's also attached. I am kneeling in front of Graham with my daughter, Anna Rose, in the team picture.

Pia Sarkar to be point person for AP's day-to-day AI coverage

A note to AP staff Wednesday from Paul Haven, vice president for News and Head of Global Newsgathering

Artificial intelligence has huge implications for how people around the world live and work. It can impact artists' work, influence elections and change the way humans interact. Artificial intelligence is not just a technology story; it is a race and ethnicity story, a health and science story, an entertainment story, a political story, an education story, and much more.

We have done a great job of telling some of those stories already, including how doctors are using AI in medicine and how state governments are trying to regulate it. But we want to make sure that we're joined up across departments, regions and formats as we tackle this critically important topic going forward so that we are sharing resources and spotting bigger trends.

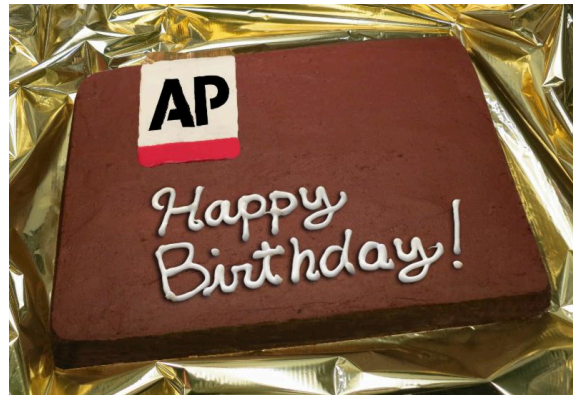
To that end, deputy global business editor Pia Sarkar will become the point person for AP's day-to-day AI coverage, working in close coordination with tech editor Shawn Chen and the reporters on the Technology team as well as Poppy Burke and Jeannie Ohm from Investigations, as well as folks in Washington and in Europe who have covered regulatory issues. Pia is well-placed to take this on as she already has deep experience working with teams across AP on high-impact stories. Having her in this

role will help to ensure we're approaching AI coverage in a thoughtful, collaborative way that leverages AP's reach and is in sync with AP's coverage priorities.

This does NOT mean all AI coverage will come through the Business News department or that we don't want regional teams and other beat teams working on AI topics. But we need someone to own this coverage globally, looking at how the various content we are doing intersects and looking for the latest trends and ideas that haven't been covered yet.



Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Dan Dillon](#)

[Randy Herschaft](#)

[Marc Wilson](#)

Stories of interest

An NPR editor who wrote a critical essay on the company has resigned after being suspended (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — A National Public Radio editor who wrote an essay criticizing his employer for promoting liberal views resigned on Wednesday, attacking NPR's new CEO on the way out.

Uri Berliner, a senior editor on NPR's business desk, posted his resignation letter on X, formerly Twitter, a day after it was revealed that he had been suspended for five days for violating company rules about outside work done without permission.

"I cannot work in a newsroom where I am disparaged by a new CEO whose divisive views confirm the very problems" written about in his essay, Berliner said in his resignation letter.

Katherine Maher, a former tech executive appointed in January as NPR's chief executive, has been criticized by conservative activists for social media messages that disparaged former President Donald Trump. The messages predated her hiring at NPR.

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

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From a Tiny Island in Maine, He Serves Up Fresh Media Gossip (New York Times)

By Steven Kurutz

In a time when the headlines are dominated by wars and a divisive presidential campaign, the magazine-world rivalry between The Atlantic and The New Yorker doesn't amount to much.

So you might have missed it when, on April 2, The Atlantic beat The New Yorker in three big categories at the 2024 National Magazine Awards.

But to Rusty Foster, who chronicles the media industry and internet culture in his daily newsletter, Today in Tabs, The Atlantic's victory was big news.

Shortly after the awards ceremony, which took place at Terminal 5 in Manhattan, Mr. Foster tapped out a fanciful report for his audience of media obsessives. Under the headline "Shutout at the TK Corral," he wrote that David Remnick, the editor of The New Yorker, "solemnly folded up and ate each of his prepared speeches as he watched The Atlantic win every category."

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

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Voting technology company settles lawsuit against far-right news outlet over 2020 election claims (AP)

WASHINGTON (AP) — A voting technology company targeted by bogus fraud claims related to the 2020 presidential election settled a defamation lawsuit Tuesday against a conservative news outlet.

The settlement between Florida-based Smartmatic and One America News Network is the latest development in a larger legal pushback by voting equipment companies that became ensnared in wild conspiracy theories falsely claiming they had flipped votes and cost former President Donald Trump reelection.

In a statement, the company said it had “resolved its litigation with OANN through a confidential settlement.” The dismissal of its lawsuit was filed in federal court in the District of Columbia. Chip Babcock, a Houston-based attorney representing the news outlet, confirmed the case had been resolved but said he was unable to disclose any of the settlement terms.

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

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The Society of Professional Journalists hires Caroline Hendrie as executive director

SPJ news release

INDIANAPOLIS — The Society of Professional Journalists, the nation’s most broad-based journalism organization, has named Caroline Hendrie as its new executive director.

“To say SPJ is fortunate to have landed an impactful industry leader and veteran journalist in Caroline Hendrie is a gross understatement,” said SPJ National President Ashanti Blaize-Hopkins. “Through an extensive search with several top-tier candidates, Caroline emerged as the clear front runner and the executive director SPJ needs at a time when our organization is critical to an industry at a crossroads. She has a track record of success in fundraising, membership growth, and coalition building well-suited to serving both SPJ and the journalism industry as a whole.”

Hendrie will serve as executive director of SPJ and its nonprofit educational arm, the SPJ Foundation. Hendrie most recently worked as an independent journalist and consultant to produce editorial projects as contractor for national philanthropies and publications.

“At this challenging moment for our field, I hope to inspire SPJ members and staff to build on their many strengths. I plan to listen to the community and work to make a compelling case for supporting SPJ,” said Hendrie. “Ultimately, I aim to help ensure that SPJ finds a sustainable way to thrive while staying true to its vital mission.”

Read more [here](#).

Today in History – April 18, 2024



Today is Thursday, April 18, the 109th day of 2024. There are 257 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 18, 1906, a devastating earthquake struck San Francisco, followed by raging fires; estimates of the final death toll range between 3,000 and 6,000.

On this date:

In 1775, Paul Revere began his famous ride from Charlestown to Lexington, Massachusetts, warning colonists that British Regular troops were approaching.

In 1865, Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston surrendered to Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman near Durham Station in North Carolina, bringing further closure to the Civil War, which had formally ended.

In 1923, the first game was played at the original Yankee Stadium in New York; the Yankees defeated the Boston Red Sox 4-1.

In 1954, Gamal Abdel Nasser seized power as he became prime minister of Egypt.

In 1955, physicist Albert Einstein died in Princeton, New Jersey, at age 76.

In 1966, Bill Russell was named player-coach of the Boston Celtics, becoming the NBA's first Black coach.

In 1978, the Senate approved the Panama Canal Treaty, providing for the complete turnover of control of the waterway to Panama on the last day of 1999.

In 1983, 63 people, including 17 Americans, were killed at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, by a suicide bomber.

Beltway in the dark: More than 300 streetlights out along the busy highway

In 2002, police arrested actor Robert Blake in the shooting death of his wife, Bonny Lee Bakley, nearly a year earlier. (Blake was acquitted at his criminal trial and found liable for her death in a civil trial.)

In 2012, Dick Clark, the ever-youthful television host and producer who helped bring rock 'n' roll into the mainstream on "American Bandstand" and rang in the New Year for the masses at Times Square, died at age 82.

In 2013, the FBI released surveillance camera images of two suspects in the Boston Marathon bombing and asked for the public's help in identifying them.

In 2015, a ship believed to be carrying migrants from Africa sank in the Mediterranean off Libya; about 500 are believed to have died.

In 2016, "Hamilton," Lin-Manuel Miranda's hip-hop stage biography of America's first treasury secretary, won the Pulitzer Prize for drama.

In 2018, Cuba's government selected 57-year-old First Vice President Miguel Mario Diaz-Canel Bermudez as the sole candidate to succeed President Raul Castro, a move that installed someone from outside the Castro family in the country's highest office for the first time in nearly six decades; the 86-year-old Castro would remain head of the Communist Party.

In 2019, the final report from special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation was made public; it outlined Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election but did not establish that members of the Trump campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government.

In 2022, Russia launched a long-feared, full-scale offensive to take control of Ukraine's east, the country's mostly Russian-speaking industrial heartland, where Moscow-backed separatists had been fighting Ukrainian forces for eight years.

In 2023, Fox and Dominion Voting Systems reached a \$787 million settlement in the voting machine company's defamation lawsuit, averting a trial in a case that exposed how the top-rated network chased viewers by promoting lies about the 2020 presidential election.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Clive Revill is 94. Actor Robert Hooks is 87. Actor Hayley Mills is 78. Actor James Woods is 77. Actor-director Dorothy Lyman is 77. Actor Cindy Pickett is 77. Actor Rick Moranis is 71. Actor Melody Thomas Scott is 68. Actor Eric Roberts is 68. Actor John James is 68. Rock musician Les Pattinson (Echo and the Bunnymen) is 66. Author-journalist Susan Faludi is 65. Actor Jane Leeves is 63. Ventriloquist-comedian Jeff Dunham is 62. Talk show host Conan O'Brien is 61. Actor Eric McCormack is 61. Actor Maria Bello is 57. Actor Mary Birdsong is 56. Actor David Hewlett is 56. Rock musician Greg Eklund (The Oolahs) is 54. Actor Lisa Locicero is 54. Actor Tamara Braun is 53. TV chef Ludovic Lefebvre is 53. Actor Fredro Starr is 53. Actor David Tennant is 53. Rock musician Mark Tremonti is 50. R&B singer Trina (Trina and Tamara) is 50. Actor Melissa Joan Hart is 48. Actor Sean Maguire is 48. Actor Kevin Rankin is 48. Actor Bryce Johnson is 47. Reality TV star Kourtney Kardashian (kar-DASH'-ee-uhn) is 45. Detroit Tigers first baseman and DH Miguel Cabrera is 41. Actor America Ferrera is 40. Actor Tom Hughes is 39. Actor Ellen Woglom (TV: "Marvel's

Inhumans”) is 37. Actor Vanessa Kirby is 36. Actor Alia Shawkat is 35. Actor Britt Robertson is 34. Actor Chloe Bennet is 32. Rock singer Nathan Sykes (The Wanted) is 31. Actor Moises Arias is 30.

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.



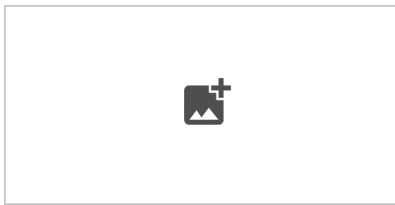
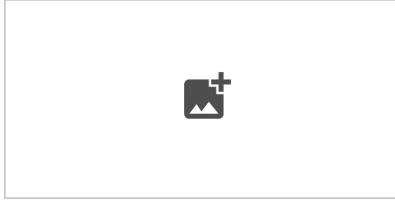
Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

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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