

## Green, Scott

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**From:** Paul and Linda Stevens <stevenspl@live.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 19, 2013 4:46 AM  
**To:** 'Paul and Linda Stevens'  
**Subject:** CONNECTING: Share your holiday story; Guttenfelder honored; Central Africa; duPont-Columbia winners; Media errors-corrections; Journalist deaths; Jailed journalists; Leaning left; Gallup poll; Beat of Week; Best of States

Colleagues,

Got a favorite holiday-related story or photo involving you as a journalist that you would like to share with your Connecting colleagues?

In the spirit of the season, send it along to me and I will share. Here is a start:

One of our Connecting colleagues, **John Filo**, and I “re-connected” on Facebook recently when I posted a photo that John took in 1978 when he was the Kansas City bureau photographer and I was the Wichita correspondent. I played Santa for a children's Christmas charity program and then wrote a first-person story about the experience and what kids wanted from Santa. Afterward, my daughter Molly, then 20 months old, climbed on my lap while I cooled off with a Coke (yes, just a Coke!) and John snapped the attached photo that appeared in AP World. It remains one of his favorite pictures and one of mine, too. Today, John – who won the Pulitzer in 1970 for his photo of the Kent State shootings - is with CBS News and my daughter Molly teaches first grade, with two kids of her own. And I now have a couple grandkids about Molly's age back then.

I thought I would share my story and John's wirephoto as they moved on the AAA Wire and national photo circuits:

**(Paul Stevens, assigned to the Associated Press bureau in Wichita, spent a day as Santa Claus at a charity event. This is his report on what the kids told him they wanted for Christmas:)**

Dolls that wet, develop diaper rash and walk in circles topped the Christmas lists of dozens of wide-eyed girls who climbed onto my lap. But not little Marcie's.

The 6-year-old, freckle-faced brunette knew exactly what her doll should – or should not – do when I asked her, “What do you want from Santa for Christmas?”

“Santa,” she replied, looking earnestly into my eyes, “I want a doll that doesn't pee.”

In my first experience at donning the white beard, red suit and hearty “Ho, Ho, Ho” of Santa Claus, I was treated to a number of revelations by the 250 Wichita-area youngsters who whispered their yuletide desires:

Most children aren't bashful about meeting Santa Claus.

Such time-honored gifts as dolls and toy trucks have retained their popularity in spite of the advertising blitz for electronic games and the space mania.

And when a 4-year-old declares that "I have to go potty," you move him along – quickly.

There were some who balked at the thought of nestling up to my big round belly, but then there were others like 9-year-old Jason who thought nothing of it.

I asked him the magic words, "What do you want for Christmas?" A frown wrinkled his forehead for a moment, then he replied, "Gosh, there's so many things to choose from. I don't know where to start." And for the next five minutes, he didn't know where to stop.

A little doll that wets and develops a diaper rash that disappears when a lotion is applied was the most popular item among the doll set.

With the boys, the hottest items were trucks, trains and toy guns.

Santa's reindeer still intrigue the younger minds. "How's your reindeer?" asked brown-eyed Julie.

Another little girl was fascinated to learn who shines Rudolph's nose. "Santa has a special elf who handles that," I told her with a reasonably straight face.

Three hours in the hot disguise did impart some cherished rewards.

"Daddy, take another picture, I'm going to give him a big kiss," was the memorable explanation of 7-year-old Marsha. My own 20-month-old Molly climbed on my lap and squealed, "Daddy, daddy," while kids in line frowned in confusion.

## Session in Santa suit has warm moments

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And when I asked blonde-haired Jennifer what she wanted for Christmas, she pointed to me and declared, "You!"



Associated Press

Giggly girls share secrets and Christmas wishes with Santa Claus

"When a 4-year-old declares, 'I have to go potty,' you let him go quickly!"

And when I asked blonde-haired Jennifer what she wanted for Christmas, she pointed to me and declared, "You!"



(Facebook reaction: Connecting colleague Steve Elliott, commented: "If only Beat of the Week had been around." And Sarah Nordgren said: "Scariest Santa ever!")

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From **Richard Pyle**, commenting on a story yesterday in Connecting on how media will cover the Apocalypse:

My idea of how the apocalypse will be reported (note lack of attribution):

Bulletin  
NEW YORK (AP) \_ The world ended toda

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Welcome to our newest member of Connecting - **Kathy Willens**.

Paul

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### **AP's David Guttenfelder picked as Time's Instagram Photographer of the Year**

<http://world.time.com/2013/12/18/david-guttenfelder-is-times-pick-for-instagram-photographer-of-the-year/>

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### **Central African Republic violence - photographs by Jerome Delay (Paul Colford)**

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2013/dec/17/central-african-republic-violence-photographs-jerome-delay>

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### **2014 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award Winners Announced**

<http://www.journalism.columbia.edu/news/897>

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### **The best and worst media errors and corrections in 2013**

<http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/regret-the-error/233613/the-best-and-worst-media-errors-and-corrections-in-2013/>

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### **71 journalists killed in 2013 'in connection with their work'**

<http://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2013/dec/18/journalist-safety-syria>

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### **Second worst year on record for jailed journalists**

<http://cpj.org/reports/2013/12/second-worst-year-on-record-for-jailed-journalists.php>

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### **Journalist consensus: Media lean left**

<http://www.politico.com/blogs/media/2013/12/journalist-consensus-media-leans-left-179852.html>

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### **Still slip-sliding: Gallup poll ranks journalists low on honesty, ethics**

<http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/mediawire/233954/still-slip-sliding-gallup-poll-ranks-journalists-low-on-honesty-ethics/>

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## **Beat of the Week** (Valerie Komor)

Colleagues,

It had been more than six years since an American named Robert Levinson vanished during a mysterious trip to Iran. Who was this man, and what had he been doing there? What was the truth about this strange case?

The truth came out in a 5,200-word investigation under the bylines of Matt Apuzzo and his former Washington investigative team partner, Adam Goldman, who joined The Washington Post two weeks ago.

They had been reporting the story since 2010, and concluded that the U.S. government claim that Levinson was a private individual on a business trip "was just a cover story."

The astounding reality: When he went missing, Levinson, a retired FBI agent, was working for a rogue group of CIA analysts on an unapproved intelligence-gathering mission, the existence of which led to one of the largest scandals in recent CIA history. The scandal was so severe that several CIA staff members were fired or disciplined and CIA rules were rewritten to restrict how analysts can work with outsiders. The family was paid \$2.5 million to avoid a suit. The story was so astounding it made this season of Homeland seem plausible.

The thing was, no one outside the government and the family knew any of this.

So getting the story on the wire had become a mission for Matt, working closely with Washington News Editor Ted Bridis. For three years they worked with extraordinary patience and extreme professionalism to confirm the details and find the way to make this tale public. That effort wins Beat of The Week as well as the deep respect of the small group of editors in New York and Washington who followed each step of what became known simply as "the Iran story."

The story they produced combined vital accountability reporting with spy-thriller narrative.

"In an extraordinary breach of the most basic CIA rules, a team of analysts \_ with no authority to run spy operations \_ paid Levinson to gather intelligence from some of the world's darkest corners. He vanished while investigating the Iranian regime for the U.S. government," the story disclosed.

It all began with information from a confidential source, which Goldman shared with the investigative team in July 2010 in an email marked: "Subject: Great tip."

The reporters pieced together details of the disappearance from documents they obtained or reviewed, plus interviews over several years with dozens of current and former U.S. and foreign officials close to the search for Levinson. Nearly all spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the sensitive case.

Through long and sometimes frustrating months Bridis kept a steady hand on the effort.

He had the presence of mind, for example, to keep the AP from reporting things The AP already knew weren't true. An error several other organizations fell into.

Washington bureau chief Sally Buzbee credited Bridis with "persistence, intellectual fortitude, savvy" in guiding the story.

Three times, the AP agreed to delay publishing because the U.S. government said it was pursuing promising leads to get Levinson home.

Bridis noted: "As the U.S. government asked AP not to publish, and as AP considered revealing the CIA scandal \_ and by extension, Levinson's secret work for the CIA \_ Matt and Adam were continually being advised by sources and others that rival news organizations were sniffing around on the story. ... We knew early in our reporting that the New York Times knew a significant chunk of the tale." But they never let those footsteps rattle them or pressure the group into publishing prematurely, before every lead was run to ground.

Others, including the Post and the Times, published reports on Levinson shortly after AP's ran.

Exactly who captured Levinson, what has happened to him or who may be holding him remains a mystery.

"Publishing this article was a difficult decision," AP Senior Vice President and Executive Editor Kathleen Carroll said in a statement.

She noted the AP, that is Matt, Adam and colleagues, had sought information on Levinson's whereabouts "from governments, agencies and any other source possible for several years." But even government officials said they had hit a wall. Having followed every lead to a dead end, "we have concluded that the importance of the story justifies publication," Kathleen wrote.

The story immediately grabbed wide play in newspapers and on websites. It was the most widely read story overall on AP Mobile on the day it was published and was widely passed along on social media.

Since the story appeared, Levinson's family, through a lawyer, has called on the Obama administration to make any diplomatic agreement with Iran contingent on Tehran's help finding the missing American. The lawyer also called on Congress to hold hearings to get to the bottom of what happened.

The Miami Herald, Levinson's hometown newspaper, demanded follow-up to the story's revelations, saying in an editorial, "The public is entitled to know more."

For years of deft work to bring this shocking truth to the public, Apuzzo wins this week's \$500 prize.

Others whose work impressed the judges:

\_ Alan Clendenning, chief of bureau, Madrid; Bram Janssen, stringer, Johannesburg; Danny Monyake, fixer/driver, Johannesburg, and Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi, photographer, Harare, for being first to find and interview on TV the bogus interpreter who faked his way through sign language interpretation at Nelson Mandela's soccer stadium memorial service, just three feet from President Barack Obama and other world leaders. The interview by AP's all-format team scooped South African and international media with the interpreter's revelations that he hallucinated about angels descending into the stadium, and that he had a

history of violence he blamed on schizophrenia. None of AP's competitors or South African media matched the depth of AP's coverage.

[http://www.denverpost.com/opinioncolumnists/ci\\_24707858/interpreter-mandela-event-i-was-hallucinating](http://www.denverpost.com/opinioncolumnists/ci_24707858/interpreter-mandela-event-i-was-hallucinating)

\_ Carla Johnson, newswoman, Chicago, and David Mercer, correspondent, Champaign, Ill., for a two-part, data-based member collaboration project that broke new ground on several fronts about the Affordable Care Act. Johnson focused on sticker shock expected among new insurees who've never encountered a deductible before, and Mercer about Illinois' uninsured, ahead of the deadline to apply for coverage by Jan. 1 .

<http://www.bnd.com/2013/12/16/2951169/sticker-shock-may-await-health.html>

<http://www.sj-r.com/article/20131214/NEWS/131219669/10272/NEWS>

\_ Meg Kinnard and Seanna Adcox, newswomen, Columbia, S.C., for reporting on ethics reform in South Carolina, where countless politicians in the last decade have been prosecuted for violating the state's ethics laws. Kinnard and Adcox each had an APNewsBreak on cases involving prominent statewide politicians. Kinnard wrote about ethics allegations against House Speaker Bobby Harrell, and Adcox broke the story that the comptroller general was being accused of using campaign money to accompany his girlfriend to the Republican National Convention, even though he had no official role there.

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20131209/WIRE/131209714/1083/ARTICLES?Title=SC-attorney-general-reviewing-Harrell-ethics-probe->

<http://www.wltx.com/news/article/258385/2/Comptroller-General-Faces-Ethics-Hearing->

\_ David Caruso, newsman, New York City, for his report on an automatic braking system that could have prevented the deadly derailment of a New York commuter train. Caruso asked officials why, if such a system existed, it wasn't in place already? He found that this relatively low-tech solution had been around since the Great Depression and every Metro-North train already had it \_ but it had only been used by the railway to keep trains from colliding. Engineers had been seen as capable of handling routine speed adjustments on curves and bridges without mechanical backup.

<http://www.startribune.com/business/235932511.html>

\_ Amy Forliti, Minneapolis, for her exclusive report that a member of the Minnesota National Guard had been charged with stealing names, Social Security numbers and security clearance levels for about 400 members of his former Army unit. Prosecutors said the man wanted to make fake IDs for members of his personal militia.

<http://bit.ly/1bKH1LO>

\_ Christina Almeida Cassidy, Georgia statehouse reporter, for her report that federal subpoenas were about to be served in an investigation into the Georgia ethics commission's handling of complaints related to Gov. Nathan Deal.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/12/11/3813028/subpoenas-related-to-ga-govs-ethics.html>

\_ Eddie Pells and Nancy Armour, national sports writers, Denver and Chicago, for investigating whether the initiatives and rules changes the NFL had put into place over the last four seasons were really having an impact on protecting players. Pells and Armour began by scouring every playbook from the first 11 weeks of the season for every major penalty called during the games. Their findings: Despite all the changes, there was an average of one hit to the head every game that got penalized and put a player's health in serious jeopardy. They also found huge disparities. The vast majority of calls went against the defense. Quarterbacks and receivers were beneficiaries of the most protection but also absorbed the most dangerous hits.

<http://www.kentucky.com/2013/12/10/2980874/ap-study-hits-to-head-still-prevalent.html>

\_ Hope Yen, newswoman, Washington, for reporting on the New Rich \_ those who fall a notch below the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans. Her exclusive conceptual scoop showed how they are a bigger group than government data suggest \_ 20 percent of adult Americans. With help from the AP's polling unit, Yen also discovered that this group tends to be politically liberal and economically conservative, making them a voting bloc that's up for grabs.

<http://usat.ly/IWSjGY>

\_ Matthew Barakat, correspondent, Mid-Atlantic/McLean, Va., for his exclusive story that Florida Rep. Alan Grayson, one of the wealthiest members of Congress, had been defrauded of \$18 million by a financial adviser. A release described a \$35 million investment fraud, and Barakat found a footnote in documents in which prosecutors noted that one victim was an elected official, "A.G." Barakat checked a list of House members and Grayson stood out because Barakat knew he was wealthy and flamboyant, so high-flying investments seemed to fit. Barakat reached out to Grayson's office several times. He continued to look through filings. Finding more evidence, he shared his findings with the congressman's office, got confirmation of the \$18 million loss and was granted an interview with Grayson.

<http://yhoo.it/1e5snXh>

Mike Oreskes

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## **Best of States** (Komor)

Colleagues,

AP's news-breaking coverage of the stutter-step rollout of President Obama's health-care overhaul has reinforced the value of the report to all of our customers. State members put a premium on scoops accompanied by data they can use to collaborate and localize stories. Carla Johnson and David Mercer provided both scoops and local data.

The Illinois-based reporters produced a two-part, data-based project that broke new ground on multiple fronts.

Johnson, a medical writer who has played a key role in the AP's national Affordable Care Act coverage, captured yet another emerging trend in the rollout by focusing on the sticker shock expected among many previously uninsured Americans. Even as they hurry to choose plans with cheap monthly payments, many consumers will be surprised to find they're still on the hook for thousands of dollars for the deductibles that are standard with most policies. Johnson's takeout (<http://www.pjstar.com/article/20131215/NEWS/131219453/10929/NEWS>) was so good that national health care team leader Tom Verdin quickly asked her to do a national version of the story that's now in the works.

With insight from Johnson, Mercer wrote a story on the ranks of Illinois' uninsured, ahead of the Dec. 23 application deadline. He discovered that in one county, the numbers were swelled by a large Amish population that pools resources to negotiate discounts with doctors, clinics and hospitals. (You can read it here: <http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20131214/news/712149797/>.) Members were then able to find other notable facts, localizing their own stories by using two databases and other AP-provided material.

That Johnson was ahead again on the health care rollout was no surprise. She has consistently been out front on trends. This time, her approach was unique. After she and Illinois News Editor Hugh Dellios designed the member-collaboration project, Johnson crafted a database of the state's uninsured by county, using census data to serve as an indication of the potential level of demand for coverage.

Then, when she identified the looming sticker-shock trend, Johnson asked a health-care consultant to craft a database to show premiums and deductibles available by county under the overhaul.

The AP was able to guide members in how to get information from both sets of data. The project enjoyed front-page play both Sunday and Monday across the state.

More than a dozen member papers eagerly embraced the project, saying it was the perfect collaboration, the kind of project that stands among the most important things we can do for them.

For reinforcing the value of the AP state report by breaking news and providing members with a way to present the information most effectively to their audiences, Johnson and Mercer share this week's \$300 Best of the States prize.

Mike Oreskes