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## Connecting April 15, 2021

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Colleagues,

Good Thursday morning on this the 15<sup>th</sup> day of April 2021,

Services were held Tuesday for AP national writer **Sharon Cohen**, who died April 5 at her home in Chicago.

Our colleague **John Dowling** provides a touching account of the farewell to one of AP's very finest journalists in the lead story for today's Connecting. Sharon, who died at 68 more than a year after she was diagnosed with brain cancer, was a national writer for 20 years.

We bring you more "moving stories" in today's issue.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy.

Paul

# Sharon Cohen laid to rest as family, AP colleagues and all whose lives she touched gather to say goodbye



**John Dowling** ([Email](#)) - Sharon Cohen was buried Tuesday afternoon after a simple graveside service at Waldheim Cemetery in the Chicago suburb of North Riverside.

Her simple wooden casket, topped by a mounded spray of red flowers, was already in place when mourners arrived, a few feet from the graves of Sharon's parents, David and Esther Cohen. These and many other nearby headstones bore metal lockets with photos of the deceased; we noted how Sharon looked so much like her mother, whom most of us had never met.

Sharon's hometown gave us a beautiful spring day to say goodbye: Brilliant sunshine with barely a cloud in sight, and a faint chilly breeze that barely moved the leaves just emerging from the tall branches overhead.

Sharon's partner, retired AP reporter Mike Robinson, led the mourners, along with Sharon's brother, Marshall Cohen, and his wife and children. Mike spoke briefly, recounting Sharon's determination in fighting glioblastoma, the brain cancer that took her life. He said Sharon would want her friends, rather than wishing "rest in peace," to continue her fight by supporting research to find effective treatments for the disease.

A funeral director led the mourners in the 23rd Psalm and the Mourner's Kaddish, a Jewish prayer which she noted does not mention death though it is so associated with funerals. To end the service, after the casket was lowered into the grave, she invited mourners to take part in another Jewish tradition, to each toss three shovels full of dirt, or a flower from the spray, into the grave. That was the moment that broke hearts.

Retired senior managing editor Mike Silverman and deputy managing editor Sarah Nordgren traveled from New York for the service, and Sharon's colleague and long-ago roommate, retired AP reporter Pauline Jelinek, came in from her home in Florida. Other current or former AP staff who attended included (forgive me if I missed anyone) Don Babwin, Tara Burghart, Terri Colby, Teresa Crawford, Paul Driscoll, Rick Gano, Martha Irvine, Jim Litke, Rafa Meza, Sarah Rafi, Lindsey Tanner, Jim Webb and yours truly. Childhood friends and Sharon's college roommate also attended.

Three other mourners deserve mention: Jonathan Annicks, a young man confined to a wheelchair after he was wounded in a random shooting in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood; his mother, Herlinda, and brother Jacob. Sharon wrote about them in a 2016 story about Chicago's plague of gun violence, and on Tuesday Jacob laboriously pushed his brother's wheelchair across the uneven ground of the cemetery to the blue canopy erected next to Sharon's grave. Herlinda Annicks joked about how much time the AP team (which also included national writer/video journalist Martha Irvine and photojournalist Charles Rex Arbogast) spent with the family, and how many times Sharon called back to check facts.

Their presence would have touched Sharon most of all.

In lieu of flowers, donations are encouraged to the [Lou and Jean Malnati Brain Tumor Institute](#) and the [Glioblastoma Foundation](#)

## Connecting mailbox

### *Why is AP Morning Wire filed from the Netherlands?*

**Paul Albright** (Email) - I have noted that this daily AP news feed – [the AP Morning Wire](#) - is being filed from the Netherlands. Has Connecting carried an explanation on why this is being filed from the Hague instead of NY?

This reply from **John Daniszewski**, AP vice president for Standards - This is the announcement that ran in early March atop the AP Morning Wire:

Beginning next week, we offer something new: As dawn approaches in the United States, some of The Associated Press top journalists across Europe will be alternating each weekday to create your Morning Wire. They'll scour our global news report for the most significant and most relevant stories and imagery – and a few unexpected things as well.

Until then, please enjoy this selection of stories from the AP's global news report. And thank you for reading.

Ted Anthony  
Director of Digital Innovation

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## *Peter King to host pre-NFL draft virtual event April 22*

**Byron Yake** ([Email](#)) - I wanted to be sure you saw the announcement about the next Peter King event for Write on Sports. He's set to host another pre-NFL draft virtual event on April 22. Please note the list of experts he's bringing with him to the national conversation - Mike Tannenbaum, Matthew Berry and Steve Wyche. It's a virtual event, and while there is no fee to attend, you must register at <https://https://www.writeonsports.org>.

In addition, there is a one-hour VIP event with Peter and Lou Riddick of ESPN/ABC. We have a limited number of seats at \$500 a ticket. So, please act immediately if you are interested. There are just a few left.

You'll find all the information you need at <https://https://www.writeonsports.org> so please check it out and let me know if you have any questions.

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## *Not exactly a garage...or a band*



From left: Times writers Laura Chang (science) and Bob Goetz (sports); AP's Marty Steinberg; nonjournalist Stephen Salchow; NYT's Dan Wakin (arts and culture), a former APer.

**Marty Steinberg** ([Email](#)) - Not exactly a garage or a band. This is a photo of some journalists and one civilian playing Mozart's Clarinet Quintet. We were performing for kids from the Adolph Ochs School during a mentoring program at The New York

Times. This photo, by Times photographer Dith Pran, was taken during our performance in Publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr.'s suite in 2006.

We would rehearse in the Times' former building on West 43rd Street, including in its auditorium and in a huge room that contained hulking press machines that were no longer used.

## More of your moving experiences

**Steve Graham (Email)** - Back in February of 1977, the AP moved me from Indianapolis to Portland, Ore. as news editor -- and Portland COB Howard Graves wanted me there as soon as possible, since then News Editor Joe Frazier was headed to the Foreign Desk in New York.

Because Karen, my wife, needed to finish the semester at the middle school where she taught in Indianapolis and our three kids were in school, she couldn't come west until June.

So, I loaded necessary items into our well-worn American Motors (now defunct) car of an uncertain age that we had picked up at a government auction and headed west.

My plan was to go by way of Montana in order to visit my brother-in-law in Kalispell and Helena COB Paul Freeman, who had hired me into the AP.

After leaving Helena, I headed towards Kalispell, but north of Missoula, our government-surplus car died. Luckily, a Montana Highway Patrol officer pushed me into the parking lot of a bar and café in the small town of Arlee, which was a short distance to the north.

I called my brother-in-law, who headed south right away and while seated at the bar, I struck up a conversation with a couple of locals and explained my predicament -- which was exacerbated by my need to arrive in Portland soonest.

One fellow asked me what I was going to do with the car and I said I didn't know at that point.

"Do you have the title with you?" he asked.

"Yes," I said.

"I'll give you a hundred dollars for it," the fellow said.

I thought it over for about a 10th of a second and said, "take me to the Missoula airport and it's a deal."

"OK," the fellow said.

So, the fellow got the car, my brother-in-law took stuff I couldn't carry on the plane and I called Howard Graves, who picked me up at the Portland airport following my



flight from Missoula.

Joe Frazier (now retired) went on to an outstanding career, that included coverage of the war in El Salvador. Unfortunately, Paul Freeman and Howard Graves are no longer with us.

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From left, Miranda, home from college; Nora, now Noah; and Emily in one of our two living rooms in the Stamford house.

**Elaine Hooker (Email)** - In late November 1996, I took a break from packing up the two-bedroom apartment I shared in Greenwich with my two youngest, who were about to turn 18. We had snagged a rambling colonial, with several bedrooms, on manicured grounds in Stamford. The only hitch was that we were essentially stagers for a house that was on the market and would have to move when the house sold. It was worth it for less than half the price of our apartment. I loved my work at AP headquarters, but worried about how I'd pay even more college tuition; their older sister was already in college. Fortunately, the others were older and on their own.

"Why don't you move to Portland, Ore.?" The voice spoke to me as I woke up from my nap. I had no idea where it came from, but I talked back. "Yeah, right. I'm moving, but to Stamford, Conn.," I said. Fortunately, I told my kids when they came home later that day. If I had not, and tried to explain it in retrospect, everyone would have thought I was a crackpot.

We settled into our spacious new home and started decorating for Christmas. About 10 days later, a message flashed on my screen in the Newspaper Membership department: Job posting, Chief of Bureau, Portland, Ore. I froze. And said a few choice words to myself.

That night I told the kids about it and they were excited. I knew I'd have to make a decision quickly about whether to apply. A dear friend who was a minister had taught

me Ignatian discernment, which involves looking at the pros and cons of choices, listening in prayer and talking with trusted friends to get to both the facts and the feelings. This process should take time in major decisions. But not now. Early Saturday morning, before the kids got up, I sat in silence until I reached a decision: I'd tell my boss, Wick Temple, on Monday morning that I wanted to apply. At first he was stunned, then as he started talking about his happy memories of Seattle, he began smiling. After a bit, I got his blessing. Then the ultimate blessing, from Lou Boccardi, president.

Fortuitously, one of the twins was scheduled to graduate from Greenwich High School on Jan. 31, so the AP agreed I would move on Feb. 1. The other twin was a bit reluctant to go. Over her mother's protestations, she had dropped out of high school and had gotten her GED. She also had a job in the AP photo library that she adored. Getting her to go is another story.

Let's just say that we boarded a plane Feb. 1 for a city none of us had ever seen. The twins thrived in a laid-back atmosphere so different from New England, where they had grown up. Most important, the cost of living was dramatically lower, and I was able to catch up financially.

To call the move divinely inspired may be a reach, but I can attest that it was a blessing for all of us. Oh and p.s. The house sold after its first open house, in late January, so we would have had to move anyway.

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**Dan Sewell (Email)** - Ed McCullough's remembrance of buying disposable diapers for an AP move to Sweden, where they cost more, brought back my own memory of something similar. Before moving from Miami to San Juan with a year-old son in early 1983, my then-wife and I bought all the Pampers we could find, knowing from her relatives in Puerto Rico they were expensive there because they had to be shipped from the U.S.

On the San Juan side, one of the workers was a big heavy guy who reminded me of Curly of The Three Stooges. Our apartment had been sitting empty for some time without the air conditioning running, and he quickly got a sweat going. His co-worker was loading the elevator from a truck outside the first floor of the building. We filled an entire room with boxes of diapers. One last elevator load arrived, and "Curly" wiped his head with a paper towel and protested in frustration: "Mas panales!" (more diapers!).

--Dan Sewell, Cincinnati (McCullough's predecessor as Caribbean News Editor).

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**Doug Tucker (Email)** - Unlike so many travel-weary colleagues, only twice in my AP career did I pull up roots - Oklahoma City to Tulsa, Tulsa to Kansas City.

But something really creepy happened that nobody can explain.

I pull away from my Tulsa apartment building on a rainy summer day, a U-Haul in tow, and start out for KC. I turn on the radio. The first thing I hear - I swear the very first thing - is Wilbert Harrison singing, "I'm goin' to Kansas City....Kansas City, here I come."

It couldn't have been mere coincidence. It had to be a sign. God was telling me something very important. I just never figured out what.

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**Michael Weinfeld ([Email](#))** - I only moved once in my AP career, but it was life-changing. There was also the move I didn't make and it was career-changing.

I started at the AP in 1983 as a writer at AP Broadcast in New York City. But it wasn't long before Brad Kalbfeld told me they were thinking of moving the Broadcast Wire to Washington to merge with AP Radio. I had been commuting to New York from Bridgeport, Ct. where I was living with my wife, Tia, and 3-year-old daughter, Anikka. By the time the merger was being considered, two of our apartments had been robbed, so we were anxious to make the move.

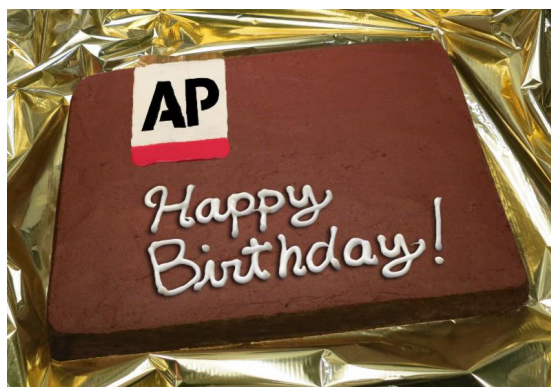
When it was announced that the merger would take place. I was among the first wave of staffers to travel to DC, where we built a house 22 miles west in Herndon, VA. My career flourished in DC, as I was able to be on the air as well as work the wire. And in 1987, Brad picked me to head AP Broadcast's first Entertainment Division, where I stayed until my retirement in 2014.

Obviously, that move worked out magnificently well.

But there was also a move I didn't make that was important to me and my family. Once it was determined that the Entertainment Division was a hit, I was offered the chance to move to LA. Workwise, it was a no-brainer, but I wasn't sure it would be right for my family. Tia is an asthmatic and would have to deal with the LA smog and we were also skeptical about raising our daughter in LA. Ultimately, we decided to stay put. Soon after, I got an exclusive interview with Tom Cruise and I took that as a sign that we'd made the right decision. It turned out that staying in DC gave me many opportunities for radio exclusives because I had no competition, unlike in LA where the competition would've been cutthroat. So, sometimes the moves you don't make are just as important as those you do.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday





Carol Strongin - [carols1616@aol.com](mailto:carols1616@aol.com)

David Wilkison - [dwickison@ap.org](mailto:dwickison@ap.org)

## Stories of interest

### ***ABC News names Kimberly Godwin as its new president.*** (New York Times)

By Michael M. Grynbaum and John Koblin

Kimberly Godwin, a veteran CBS News executive, was named the next president of ABC News on Wednesday, making her the first Black woman to lead a major broadcast network's news division.

Ms. Godwin replaces James Goldston, who announced his departure from ABC in January. Her appointment was guided by Peter Rice, the chairman of general entertainment at The Walt Disney Company, which owns ABC. She will begin in her job in early May.



Her promotion is just one of several changes in the world of broadcast news as the industry adjusts to the end of Donald J. Trump's presidency and to shifting viewing habits among audiences who are showing signs of fatigue after years of devouring TV news.

CBS News is expected to announce in the coming days a successor for its own president, Susan Zirinsky, who is leaving to take on a producing role at ViacomCBS. CNN's president, Jeff Zucker, said he will depart the cable network by the end of the year, and Rashida Jones recently became the new president of MSNBC. When Ms. Jones took over MSNBC, she became the first Black woman to run one of the three major cable news channels.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Study finds people want more than watchdogs for journalists*** (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — A study of the public's attitude toward the press reveals that distrust goes deeper than partisanship and down to how journalists define their very mission.

In short: Americans want more than a watchdog.

The study, released Wednesday by the Media Insight Project, a collaboration between the American Press Institute and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, suggests ways that news organizations can reach people they may be turning off now.

"In some ways, this study suggests that our job is broader and bigger than we've defined it," said Tom Rosenstiel, executive director of the American Press Institute.

The study defines five core principles or beliefs that drive most journalists: keep watch on public officials and the powerful; amplify voices that often go unheard; society works better with information out in the open; the more facts people have the closer they will get to the truth; and it's necessary to spotlight a community's problems to solve them.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Adolphe Bernotas, Mark Mittelstadt, Lou Boccardi.

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## ***Bad news for journalists: The public doesn't share our values. But there's hope.*** (Washington Post)

By Margaret Sullivan  
Media columnist

Ask almost any group of journalists to name the core values of their profession, and they'll probably deliver a list like this:

Oversight. We're the watchdogs keeping an eye on government officials and other powerful people and institutions.

Transparency. We believe it's best to put information out in the open, not keep it hidden.

Factuality. It's crucial to provide as much accurate information as possible to get to the truth.

Spotlighting wrongdoing. We think society's problems are best solved by exposing them to public criticism.

Giving a voice to the voiceless. It's our job to advocate for those lacking power or social standing.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Lou Boccardi.

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## ***White House Correspondents' Association cancels 2021 dinner*** (Politico)

By BENJAMIN DIN

The White House Correspondents' Association on Wednesday said it was canceling its annual dinner for the second year in a row over concerns about the ongoing pandemic.

"We have worked through any number of scenarios over the last several months, but to put it plainly: while improving rapidly, the COVID-19 landscape is just not at a place where we could make the necessary decisions to go ahead with such a large indoor event," WHCA executive director Steven Thomma wrote in an email to members.

The decision to not hold the event comes as the U.S. has seen a rise in the number of daily vaccinations administered, but administration health officials continue to warn Americans not to ease up on coronavirus restrictions too quickly.

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

# Today in History - April 15, 2021



## By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, April 15, the 105th day of 2021. There are 260 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson, baseball's first Black major league player, made his official debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers on opening day at Ebbets Field. (The Dodgers defeated the Boston Braves, 5-3.)

### On this date:

In 1452, artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci was born in or near the Tuscan town of Vinci.

In 1850, the city of San Francisco was incorporated.

In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln died nine hours after being shot the night before by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theater in Washington; Andrew Johnson became the nation's 17th president.

In 1892, General Electric Co., formed by the merger of the Edison Electric Light Co. and other firms, was incorporated in Schenectady, New York.

In 1912, the British luxury liner RMS Titanic foundered in the North Atlantic off Newfoundland more than 2 1/2 hours after hitting an iceberg; 1,514 people died, while less than half as many survived.

In 1945, during World War II, British and Canadian troops liberated the Nazi concentration camp Bergen-Belsen. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who died on April 12, was buried at the Roosevelt family home in Hyde Park, New York.

In 1989, 96 people died in a crush of soccer fans at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, England. Students in Beijing launched a series of pro-democracy protests; the demonstrations culminated in a government crackdown at Tiananmen Square.

In 1990, legendary film star Greta Garbo died in New York at age 84. The comedy sketch show "In Living Color" premiered on Fox TV.

In 1998, Pol Pot, the notorious leader of the Khmer Rouge, died at age 72, evading prosecution for the deaths of two million Cambodians.

In 2009, whipped up by conservative commentators and bloggers, tens of thousands of protesters staged "tea parties" around the country to tap into the collective angst stirred up by a bad economy, government spending and bailouts.

In 2013, two bombs made from pressure cookers exploded at the Boston Marathon finish line, killing two women and an 8-year-old boy and injuring more than 260. Suspected bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev (TAM'-ehr-luhn tsahr-NEYE'-ehv) died in a shootout with police; his brother, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev (joh-HAHR' tsahr-NEYE'-ehv), was tried, convicted and sentenced to death.

In 2019, fire swept across the top of the Notre Dame Cathedral as the soaring Paris landmark underwent renovations; the blaze collapsed the cathedral's spire and spread to one of its landmark rectangular towers, but fire officials said the church's structure had been saved.

Ten years ago: The first of three days of tornadoes to strike the central and southern U.S. began; according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, there were an estimated 177 twisters and at least 38 fatalities.

Five years ago: House Republicans departed Washington, having missed a deadline to pass their long-stalled budget in an embarrassment for House Speaker Paul Ryan. A North Korea missile launch meant to celebrate the birthday of the country's founder, Kim Il Sung, apparently ended in failure.

One year ago: The government reported that the nation's industrial output in March registered its biggest decline since the U.S. demobilized at the end of World War II as factories shut down amid the coronavirus epidemic. Best Buy became the latest national chain to announce massive furloughs, saying it would sideline about 51,000 hourly employees. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said residents would be required to wear face coverings any time they came into close contact with people outside their homes. California Gov. Gavin Newsom said the state would give \$500 coronavirus relief payments to immigrants who were in the country illegally. The Treasury Department confirmed that, in an unprecedented move, President Donald Trump's name would appear on the stimulus checks that the IRS would be sending to tens of millions of Americans.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Claudia Cardinale is 83. Author and politician Jeffrey Archer is 81. Rock singer-guitarist Dave Edmunds is 78. Actor Michael Tucci is 75. Actor Lois Chiles is 74. Writer-producer Linda Bloodworth-Thomason is 74. Actor Amy Wright is 71. Columnist Heloise is 70. Actor Sam McMurray is 69. Actor-screenwriter Emma Thompson is 62. Bluegrass musician Jeff Parker is 60. Singer Samantha Fox is 55. Olympic gold, silver and bronze medal swimmer Dara Torres is 54. Rock musician Ed O'Brien (Radiohead) is 53. Actor Flex Alexander is 51. Actor Danny Pino is 47. Actor Douglas Spain is 47. Country singer-songwriter Chris Stapleton is 43. Actor Luke Evans is 42. Rock musician Patrick Carney (The Black Keys) is 41. Rock musician Zach



Carothers (Portugal. The Man) is 40. Actor-writer Seth Rogen is 39. Actor Alice Braga is 38. Americana singer-songwriter Margo Price is 38. Rock musician De'Mar Hamilton (Plain White T's) is 37. Actor Samira Wiley is 34. Actor Leonie Elliott is 33. Actor Emma Watson is 31. Actor Maisie Williams is 24.

## Got a story or photos to share?

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:

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



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