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Connecting December 17, 2021

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this Dec. 17, 2021,

Today's Connecting gets us into the holiday season, with an AP Images blog on Christmas celebrated around the world, throughout history.

Kathryn Bubien (Email) of the London bureau produced the blog, with a host of great images from AP photographers around the globe. I'm hoping there will be more holiday stories to come in the early part of next week.

And a heads-up: I will soon be asking for you to share your New Year's resolutions for 2022.

Have a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

Christmas around the world, throughout history

AP Images Blog

Photo editing and text by Kathryn Bubien

Christmastime; mill races, cutting the Christmas cheese, turkey auctions and sidewalk Santas.

From the traditional yuletide rituals to the more unique, here are just some of the ways the festive season has been celebrated throughout the years around the world.



Britain's King George VI and his family attended Christmas morning service in the Sandringham Estate Church, Norfolk, Dec. 25, 1936. From left to right; King George VI; Princess Elizabeth; Princess Margaret Rose and Queen Elizabeth. Other members of the royal party are not identified. (AP Photo/Len Puttnam)



The Christmas tree towers over the ice skating rink at Rockefeller Center in New York City on Christmas Day, Dec. 25, 1979. (AP Photo/Marty Lederhandler)



The Christmas tree market of Kotche, Czechoslovakia, on Dec. 19, 1968. (AP Photo)



Regent Street, one of London's busiest shopping districts, is decorated for Christmas, 1989. (AP Photo)

View more [here](#). Shared by Francesca Pitaro.

The AP Interview: Karzai 'invited' Taliban to stop chaos



Former President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai speaks during an interview with the Associated Press in Kabul , Afghanistan on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. (AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris)

By KATHY GANNON

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The Taliban didn't take the Afghan capital — they were invited, says the man who issued the invitation.

In an Associated Press interview, former Afghan President Hamid Karzai offered some of the first insights into the secret and sudden departure of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani — and how he came to invite the Taliban into the city “to protect the population so that the country, the city doesn't fall into chaos and the unwanted elements who would probably loot the country, loot shops.”

When Ghani left, his security officials also left. Defense minister Bismillah Khan even asked Karzai if he wanted to leave Kabul when Karzai contacted him to know what remnants of the government still remained. It turned out there were none. Not even the Kabul police chief had remained.

Karzai, who was the country's president for 13 years after the Taliban were first ousted in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, refused to leave.

In a wide-ranging interview at his tree-lined compound in the center of the city where he lives with his wife and young children, Karzai was adamant that Ghani's flight scuttled a last-minute plan focused on the Taliban's entry. He and Abdullah Abdullah, the government's chief negotiator, had been working with the Taliban leadership in

Doha on a negotiated agreement to allow the militia to enter the capital under controlled conditions.

Read more [here](#).

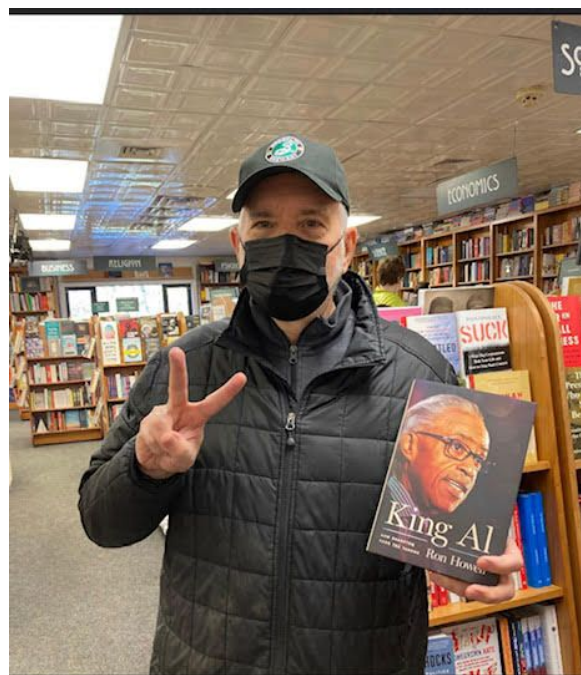
'King Al: How Sharpton Took the Throne'

(Our colleague Paul Colford shares word of a new book by former AP staffer Ron Howell – "King Al," which, Paul notes, is ostensibly a bio of Al Sharpton, the Black activist and MSNBC host, but there's more to his book.)

Ron Howell ([Email](#)) - Former Newsday foreign editor Peter Eisner reveals a truth about "King Al: How Sharpton Took the Throne."

While the title is fully about Sharpton, the book is largely about late twentieth-century New York newspapers. It was that platform, especially the tabloid versions, that turned Sharpton into the controversial media figure he was -- and the wealthy, influential cable news host he is today.

Back in the early-mid-1980s, when Peter was AP's editor in Mexico City, he hired me an hour after I had knocked on his door, unannounced, seeking a job. As fate would have it, we both later were hired at Newsday, where hotshot editor Les Payne (RIP) became a mentor and booster to us both.



Had there been no Peter Eisner, I would not have had the chance to spend months in Cuba as a correspondent for Newsday; and I would not have become the first reporter to interview Assata Shakur (wanted by the FBI in the 1973 killing of a New Jersey state trooper) and reveal she was living in Cuba under a grant of asylum from Fidel Castro.

That story led me to write another piece. It cited U.S.-based Black radicals who believed Sharpton had been trying to get them to reveal what they knew about Assata, with the intention of informing the FBI of her whereabouts. In my book, Sharpton denies he was trying to do that. But the book also quotes those who maintain, to this day, he was trying to do just that.

Had there been no Peter Eisner in my life, there would be no "King Al."

Peter emailed this photo to me, saying he was deeply touched by the reflections in the book.

"I went to Politics and Prose (in D.C.) and bought the book . . . I had known about parts of the book that you shared with me, but had no idea of what you would write about me, you and Les. Musha read that part to me as we were riding home and I could hardly believe what I heard. I am deeply moved, my brother. It was a great run for the three of us and beyond. I'm very proud of what we did, and who we were and are, and hope that I can continue to serve the legacy."

One of titles I originally had for "King Al" was, "When Craft was King." (Sharpton was going to be in the subtitle.)

This past Friday, I experienced the honor of being toasted by former Newsday colleagues at P.J. Clarke's in Manhattan. It was organized by ever-generous Paul Colford, who has advised so many of us about book publishing. (The skittish guy in me was waiting for it to turn into a roast, but it didn't.) There with Paul and me and Marilyn were: Steve Isenberg, publisher at the late New York Newsday; Sheryl McCarthy, author and columnist; Ernest Tollerson, editorial page editor; Sheila McKenna, staff writer and columnist; Paul Moses, award-winning reporter; Ellis Henican, columnist and author.

(FYI: My teaching time is coming to an end at Brooklyn College. I'm working the future out with my savior Marilyn who's properly praised in the Acknowledgements of "King Al." She originally didn't want me to do the book but now praises it. Oh well.)

Fordham University Press asked me to inform that it's giving holiday discounts. Click [here](#). I was told a buyer can enter code - GIFT2021 - at checkout.

(Shared by Paul Colford)

Connecting mailbox

Julian Wilson's two prescriptions for relief

Bob Daugherty ([Email](#)) – Thursday, Gene Herrick reminded me of a couple of Julian Wilson's prescriptions for relief. I was once assigned to lend a hand at an NHL championship game in Cleveland. It was damn cold and the salamanders (heaters) seemed to outnumber the players on the benches. On this same trip, the visiting photographers were introduced to one of Julian's inventions. He had designed a "relief tube" A funnel on the end of a hose that emptied out the back of his VW bus allowing the driver to avoid relief stops.

The cold photographers arrived back at the Plain Dealer, where the photos were being processed. We noted a bottle of bourbon sitting on a desk nearby. I wondered if there would be an issue over the spirits. I also noticed someone about to partake of the spirits. We were eventually introduced to the managing editor of the Plain Dealer by Julian. He poured for the group.

Julian had managed a couple of ways to get relief.

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AP does weeklies a favor, allows them to use story on election fraud

Al Cross ([Email](#)) - Millions of Americans believe the 2020 election was stolen by fraud. That's not true, The Associated Press concluded after exhaustive investigations in the six most closely decided states. There is no greater journalistic authority than the AP, so the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues asked the wire service to allow the story to be republished by weekly newspapers that don't subscribe to it. AP agreed, asking only that links to the story and a sidebar be posted along with it. We thank AP executive Adam Yeomans and his colleagues for this big favor and encourage weeklies to take advantage of it.

The story, and a link to the sidebar with state-by-state details, is [here](#).

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A Mort Retort: Facete Rectos Pagare

By **MORT ROSENBLUM** ([Email](#))

PARIS — Okay, enough now. Climate scientists wring their hands but are not yet without hope. America's Constitution, if fraying, is still intact. Paris is torn up and choked with traffic, but it's not burning. We can save the world, but we had damned well better get started.

As it turns out, Chicken Little was right; the sky is falling. Particulates poison the atmosphere. And herd impunity allows governments, industry and individuals to ravage what's left down below. We face the unthinkable if enough sensible people cannot get a grip and take action.

The Ship of Fools, as Plato labeled humanity, is sinking fast. Rather than bail hard and head toward a safe harbor, we gouge yet more holes in the hull. Millions go hungry as a feckless few hoard dwindling food stocks. Each year, more turn violent in desperation.

I took a break from the Mort Report to ponder my last 40 years in the wilderness watching the world fall on its axis. Sorting out thoughts on how we benighted shipmates can get back on course, I realized the answer is embroidered in faux-Latin on my canvas desk chair.

Read more [here](#).

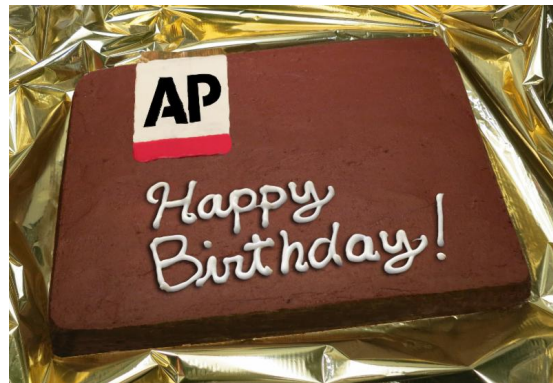
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Connecting sky shot – North Carolina



Joe Macenka ([Email](#)) - This is one reason why you would get up before dawn on vacation to go surf fishing on Hatteras Island in Avon, N.C.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Susanne Shaw

On Saturday to...

Hillel Italie

Will Lester

On Sunday to...

[Sibby Christensen](#)

Stories of interest

Media groups sue Iowa governor over open records law (AP)

By DAVID PITT

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Three media organizations and their reporters sued Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds on Thursday, alleging she has repeatedly violated the state's open records laws by ignoring requests for government records.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa is representing Laura Belin, who operates the liberal-leaning Bleeding Heartland blog; Randy Evans, executive director of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council; and Clark Kauffman, a reporter for the Iowa Capital Dispatch.

The reporters say they have tried to get public records from Reynolds' office starting as early as April 2020 without success despite waiting for months and in some cases, well over a year. Often, the governor's office didn't acknowledge the records requests or respond to inquiries.

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

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Vulture capitalists are circling my old newspaper. Here's why we need to fight them off. (Washington Post)

By Margaret Sullivan
Media columnist

Horror is not too strong a word for how the news hit me. Alden Global, the most rapacious of the ownership groups currently wrecking local newspapers, wanted to buy my old paper, the Buffalo News.

My reaction came partly from sentiment. The daily, one of two that came to my family's door throughout my childhood, was where I got my start as a summer intern, eventually becoming its top editor. A decade ago, I was still in that job. Over the years, I had hired scores of journalists and, helped by a talented group of editors, had overseen the coverage of everything from the assassination of a local abortion provider to the high cost of being poor in one of the nation's most impoverished cities. We certainly weren't perfect but we did a lot of important work.

My reaction also came from hard knowledge of what has happened elsewhere.

When Alden buys a paper, the results are unfailingly negative for the community. It had already happened in Denver, San Jose and a multitude of other places. Alden slashes newsroom staffs, sells off its real estate and focuses on wringing out the last possible drop of revenue while ignoring long-term sustainability, hence earning the name “vulture capitalists.” I knew this from years of covering the news media and from writing a book about the dire effects on our democracy when local news declines. In short, we become more politically polarized and less engaged in our communities.

Read more [here](#).

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Delaware judge rejects Fox News motion to dismiss lawsuit (AP)

WASHINGTON (AP) — A judge Thursday rejected a motion by Fox News to dismiss a \$1.6 billion defamation lawsuit brought against the cable news giant by Dominion Voting Systems over claims about the 2020 presidential election.

In the 52-page ruling Delaware Superior Court Judge Eric Davis said that the voting machine company had shown that “At this stage, it is reasonably conceivable that Dominion has a claim for defamation per se.”

Denver-based Dominion filed a lawsuit earlier this year against the media organization alleging that some Fox News employees elevated false charges that Dominion had changed votes in the 2020 election through algorithms in its voting machines that had been created in Venezuela to rig elections for the late dictator Hugo Chavez. On-air personalities brought on Trump allies who spread the claims, and then amplified those claims on Fox News’ social media platforms.

Read more [here](#).

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Blair Kerkhoff: A leukemia diagnosis means this year’s present is the gift of life (Kansas City Star)

By BLAIR KERKHOFF
The Kansas City Star

Donating blood was something I’ve tried doing once a year or so. Late this past summer, I showed up for my appointment but didn’t get to give. The Red Cross folks said I had a low platelet count. Hmm.

The next month, I mentioned this at my annual physical. The doctor had me lie down, felt my abdomen and noticed an enlarged spleen. Off to the specialist, and the news no one wants to hear:

Cancer.

Specifically, a rare form of leukemia called hairy cell leukemia, named for how it looks in the bone marrow under a microscope. Some 61,000 are diagnosed annually with leukemia. Fewer than 800 cases of hairy cell leukemia are identified in the U.S. per year. Some exclusive club.

This was on Nov. 8, and since then everything has changed. It had been a fall of covering Chiefs games and news conferences. The college basketball season, including the highly anticipated Kansas-Missouri game, was about to begin.

Read more [here](#).

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How Ashley Biden's Diary Made Its Way to Project Veritas (New York Times)

By Adam Goldman and Michael S. Schmidt

In the final two months of the 2020 campaign, President Donald J. Trump, his grip on power slipping because of his handling of the pandemic, desperately tried to change the narrative by attacking the business dealings of Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s son Hunter, invoking his name publicly over 100 times.

At the same time, another effort was underway in secret to try to expose the contents of a diary kept the previous year by Mr. Biden's daughter, Ashley Biden, as she underwent treatment for addiction.

Now, more than a year later, the Justice Department is deep into an investigation of how the diary found its way into the hands of supporters of Mr. Trump at the height of the campaign.

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

The Final Word

We spoke to the son who wrote the viral obituary for his 'plus-sized Jewish lady redneck' mother



The late Renay Mandel Corren holds the hand of her son Andy, whose obituary for his mother went viral Wednesday night.

By Julia Gergely

(JTA) — (New York Jewish Week via JTA) — When Andy Corren’s mother, Renay Mandel Corren, died on Saturday in El Paso, Tex., at age 84, he did what many bereaved children with a creative bent would do: He wrote an obituary.

“A more disrespectful, trash-reading, talking and watching woman in NC, FL or TX was not to be found,” Corren wrote in the obituary that was published Wednesday in the Fayetteville Observer, the newspaper of the North Carolina city where Mandel Corren lived for many years. He honored his “plus-sized Jewish lady redneck” mother thusly: “Hers was an itinerant, much-lived life, a Yankee Florida liberal Jewish Tough Gal who bowled ’em in Japan, rolled ’em in North Carolina and was a singularly unique parent.”

The loving yet warts-and-all obituary of the “zaftig good-time gal” quickly went viral after crime writer Sarah Weinman tweeted it on Wednesday evening to her 380,000-plus followers. This was much to the surprise of Corren, who describes himself in the obituary as “her favorite son, the gay one who writes catty obituaries in his spare time, Andy Corren, of — obviously — New York City.”

Read more [here](#). Shared by Linda Sargent.

Original obituary [here](#). Shared by Marty Steinberg, Linda Sargent.



Celebrating AP's 175th

AP store for 175th, vintage merchandise



The AP has created a store with 175th anniversary merchandise available for purchase, as well as items branded with some of AP's most historic logos.

Click [Here](#).

AP Through Time: A Photographic History



AP Through Time: A Photographic History” - created by Director of Corporate Archives, Valerie Komor, is a keepsake commemorating AP’s 175th year. Small in size (6 ¾ x 6 ¾ in.), it is organized chronologically in eight segments that trace the broad outlines of AP’s development from 1846 to the present: Beginnings, Evolution, New

Century, Modernity, Expansion, One World, Speed, and Transformation. Click [here](#) to view and make an order.

Today in History - Dec. 17, 2021



By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Dec. 17, the 351st day of 2021. There are 14 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 17, 1944, the U.S. War Department announced it was ending its policy of excluding people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast.

On this date:

In 1777, France recognized American independence.

In 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright of Dayton, Ohio, conducted the first successful manned powered-airplane flights near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, using their experimental craft, the Wright Flyer.

In 1933, in the inaugural NFL championship football game, the Chicago Bears defeated the New York Giants, 23-21, at Wrigley Field.

In 1969, the U.S. Air Force closed its Project "Blue Book" by concluding there was no evidence of extraterrestrial spaceships behind thousands of UFO sightings.

In 1975, Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme was sentenced in Sacramento, California, to life in prison for her attempt on the life of President Gerald R. Ford. (She was paroled in Aug. 2009.)

In 1979, Arthur McDuffie, a Black insurance executive, was fatally injured after leading police on a chase with his motorcycle in Miami. (Four white police officers accused of

beating McDuffie were later acquitted, sparking riots.)

In 1992, President George H.W. Bush, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (muhl-ROO'-nee) and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (sah-LEE'-nuhs deh gohr-TAHR'-ee) signed the North American Free Trade Agreement in separate ceremonies. (After President Donald Trump demanded a new deal, the three countries signed a replacement agreement in 2018.)

In 2000, President-elect George W. Bush named Stanford professor Condoleezza Rice his national security adviser and Alberto Gonzales to the White House counsel's job, the same day Bush was named Time magazine's Person of the Year.

In 2001, Marines raised the Stars and Stripes over the long-abandoned American Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan.

In 2007, Iran received its first nuclear fuel from Russia, paving the way for the startup of its reactor.

In 2014, the United States and Cuba restored diplomatic relations, sweeping away one of the last vestiges of the Cold War.

In 2018, a report from the Senate intelligence committee found that Russia's political disinformation campaign on U.S. social media was more far-reaching than originally thought, with troll farms working to discourage Black voters and "blur the lines between reality and fiction" to help elect Donald Trump.

Ten years ago: North Korean leader Kim Jong Il died after more than a decade of iron rule; he was 69, according to official records, but some reports indicated he was 70.

Five years ago: President-elect Donald Trump said he intended to nominate Mick Mulvaney, a conservative Republican congressman from South Carolina, to be the White House budget director. Dr. Henry Heimlich (HYM'-lihk), the surgeon who created the life-saving Heimlich maneuver for choking victims, died in Cincinnati at age 96.

One year ago: A government advisory panel endorsed a second COVID-19 vaccine, paving the way for the shot from Moderna and the National Institutes of Health to be added to the U.S. vaccination campaign. California reported 52,000 new COVID-19 cases in a single day – equal to what the entire country had been averaging two months earlier – as the state emerged as the latest epicenter of the U.S. outbreak. French President Emmanuel Macron tested positive for COVID-19 following a week in which he met with numerous European leaders. Federal authorities expressed increased alarm about a long-undetected intrusion into U.S. and other computer systems that officials suspected were carried out by Russian hackers. Russian President Vladimir Putin rejected allegations that the Kremlin was behind the poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny, and accused U.S. intelligence agencies of fomenting the claims.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Armin Mueller-Stahl is 91. Pope Francis is 85. Singer-actor Tommy Steele is 85. Actor Bernard Hill is 77. Actor Ernie Hudson is 76. Comedian-actor Eugene Levy is 75. Actor Marilyn Hassett is 74. Actor Wes Studi is 74. Pop musician Jim

Bonfanti (The Raspberries) is 73. Actor Joel Brooks is 72. Rock singer Paul Rodgers is 72. R&B singer Wanda Hutchinson Vaughn (The Emotions) is 70. Actor Bill Pullman is 68. Actor Barry Livingston is 68. Country singer Sharon White is 68. Producer-director-writer Peter Farrelly is 65. Rock musician Mike Mills (R.E.M.) is 63. Pop singer Sarah Dallin (Bananarama) is 60. Country singer Tracy Byrd is 55. Country musician Duane Propes is 55. Actor Laurie Holden is 52. DJ Homicide (Sugar Ray) is 51. Actor Sean Patrick Thomas is 51. Actor Claire Forlani is 50. Pop-rock musician Eddie Fisher (OneRepublic) is 48. Actor Sarah Paulson is 47. Actor Marissa Ribisi is 47. Actor Giovanni Ribisi is 47. Actor Milla Jovovich (YO'-vuh-vich) is 46. Singer Bree Sharp is 46. Singer-songwriter Ben Goldwasser (MGMT) is 39. Rock singer Mikky Ekko is 38. Actor Shannon Woodward is 37. Actor Emma Bell is 35. Actor Vanessa Zima is 35. Rock musician Taylor York (Paramore) is 32. Actor Graham Rogers is 31. Actor-singer Nat Wolff is 27.

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.

Paul Stevens

Editor, Connecting newsletter

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