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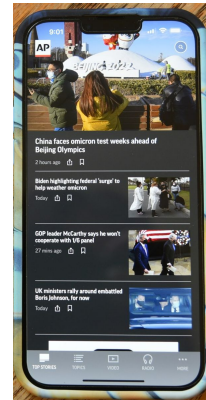
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Connecting

April 14, 2022

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Good Thursday morning on this April 14, 2022,

[Peter Prengaman](#) has made a name for himself in his nearly 20 years with The Associated Press as an excellent writer and editor. But his friends and colleagues were treated to a new side of him:

A poet.

On Tuesday, the first time that AP employees returned to their offices after two years of working remotely due to coronavirus, Peter shared a video on Facebook, and he notes:

“Because of covid, many around the world have spent a lot of time working from home, and doing it via Zoom. So many Zoom meetings are necessary, and we have all learned

to get things done across the screen. Still, there are often funny moments. This poem aims to capture some of them."

Click [here](#) to view a YouTube version. (Thanks to **Reed Saxon** for sharing.)

Prengaman works in the Phoenix bureau, where he was news director for the Western United States before his appointment last December as AP's Global Climate + Environmental News Director, a position that will take him to New York headquarters.

He began his AP career as a reporter in Oregon and later served as a Caribbean correspondent based in the Dominican Republic. He has served in Los Angeles, Atlanta and was news editor for Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. He was news director in Brazil before returning to the U.S. in 2019 to become West news director.



Samantha Jach bringing a Teletype cake to AP New York as a "homecoming" gift to the business planning and analysis department (Wednesday's Connecting). **Peter Prengaman** and his Zoom poetry. Ye Olde Connecting Editor wonders if there are any other such celebrations of a return to the workplace. Anyone, anyone?

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

10 weeks of Ukraine, documented by Vadim Ghirda



A Ukrainian serviceman speaks, backdropped by a bullet riddled effigy of Russian President Vladimir Putin, during a media interview at a frontline position in the Luhansk region, eastern Ukraine, Tuesday, Feb. 1, 2022. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda)

AP Images Blog

An elderly woman draped in snow. A child peering out a train window into the unknown. A pair of hands bound. From Jan. 25 to April 8, AP photographer Vadim Ghirda took some of the most recognizable images of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Ghirda spent his earliest days in Ukraine's eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk as tensions rose over warnings that Russia planned to invade Ukraine. Russia at the time strenuously denied such plans, and then did invade on Feb. 24.

The first days of the invasion found Ghirda in bombarded Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, crouching in the snow next to a dead soldier and a destroyed Russian rocket launcher.

Then he was on to Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, to document the frantic crush of people trying to leave the country while they still could. His camera captured a serene-looking baby in the middle of the anxious crowd. Ghirda was there again as the flight from the capital region later became more dangerous, photographing an elderly woman clutching her head after crossing the Irpin River under a bridge that had been destroyed.

Read and view more [here](#).

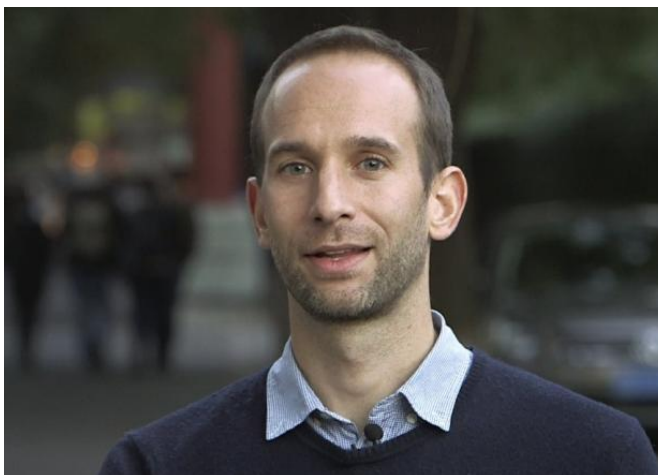
Aritz Parra named Southern Europe news director

In a memo to staff, AP News Director for Europe and Africa James Jordan announced that Aritz Parra is the new news director for Southern Europe:

I am very pleased to announce that Aritz Parra has been appointed as news director for Southern Europe.

Aritz needs no introduction to you all as he is already a strong editorial voice and leader in Spain and across Europe. In his new role he will lead the southern region that includes Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Spain and Portugal. He will be based in Madrid and starts his new role later this month. He will travel regularly to Rome as well as the other key regional bureaus.

Aritz is an excellent journalist with a wide skillset in both print and video and impressive leadership experience gained in Spain, standing in for Karl Ritter as Southern Europe leader on a number of occasions and most recently working to help coordinate the coverage of the Ukraine war. He has shown himself to be calm, thoughtful and insightful – all qualities vital in his new role.



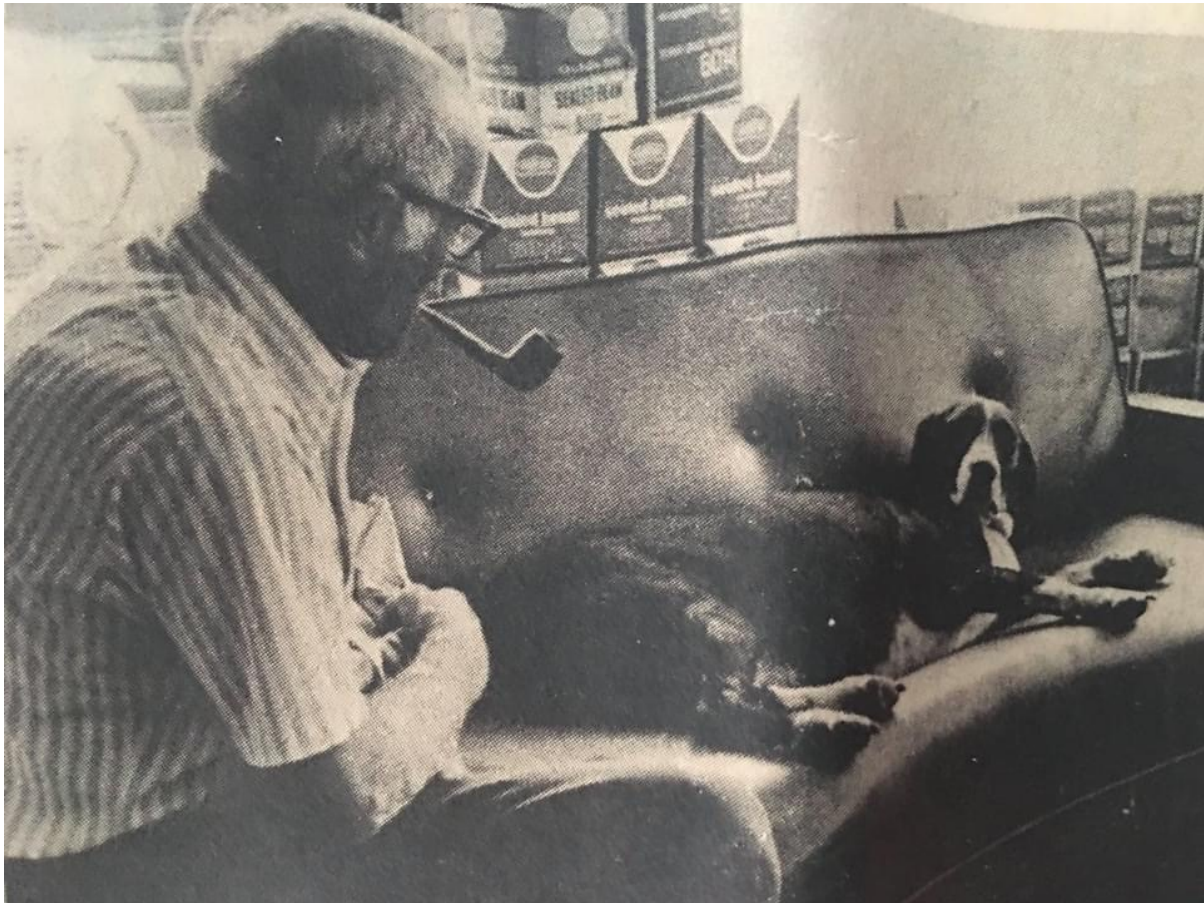
Aritz joined the AP in 2012 as the agency's senior producer in Beijing, leading video coverage of the beginning of the Xi Jinping era, a shifting economy, the erosion of individual and civil rights, and the impact of pollution and climate change among others. He also covered breaking news, including natural and man-made tragedies, in Japan, South Korea, Mongolia and in some of the most challenging countries for journalists: Myanmar and North Korea.

Upon relocating to Madrid, in late 2016, he pivoted from video back to print as the primary format, writing stories for both English and Spanish-language audiences. Since then, he has led the Iberia Peninsula's coverage on elections, extremist attacks, the rise of far-right populism, deadly wildfires, the reverberations of the Venezuelan crisis, separatism in Catalonia, Spain's painful reckoning with its recent history, a volcano eruption, the multi-layered issue of migration to Europe and the conflict in Western Sahara. The Iberia team's reporting on the first year of the devastating coronavirus pandemic was recognized with a Gramling Award.

Please join me in congratulating Aritz.

Click [here](#) for link to this story. Shared by Nicole Meir.

The South Alabamian, the Breedloves, and Boots



Ed Williams - My first newspaper job was my favorite and most memorable newspaper job. It was my first job out of college, 46 years ago next month, and I learned so much about community journalism and weekly papers in Jackson, Alabama.

I often told my students, if you want to succeed in journalism, start out at a good weekly newspaper.



So many special memories of the paper, the town, the people, and of Mike and Linda Breedlove, the owners of the newspaper. One time Mike and Linda came to Auburn and spoke to my community journalism class, and I am thankful we remained dear friends for all these years.

Mike passed away last summer from the effects of Parkinson's disease. When I spoke at Mike's memorial service last July, I shared many memories and I told the story of Boots.

I was on the journalism faculty at Auburn University for 30 years. Students loved the story about Boots the dog who would hang out at Doug McGowin's service station seven days a week, including Sundays.

McGowin's was closed on Sundays, but as smart as Boots was, she didn't know days of the week. She would hang around for a while at McGowin's, then go back home.

And wait for Monday morning....

I think I got more comments about that little story about Boots than anything else I ever wrote as a reporter. I learned from my experiences at The South Alabamian that every person, every man, woman, boy and girl — and every dog — has a story to tell.

This morning I am recalling memories of Mike and Linda, The South Alabamian and yes, also Boots and the other stories I wrote about people and dogs.

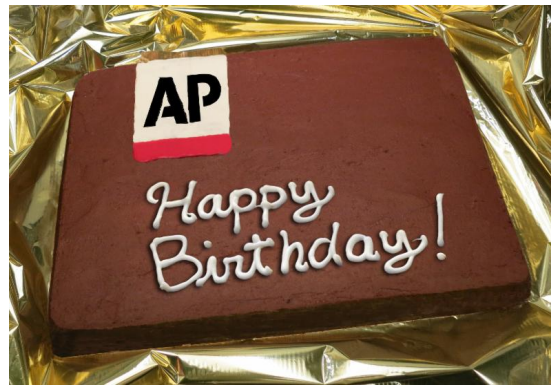
Memories grow even stronger after 46 years.

A window to heaven



Clouds form around the setting sun in Salem, Oregon, on Monday, looking like a window into heaven. Photo by Zoe Selsky.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Dennis Ferraro

Melissa Jordan

Welcome to Connecting



Samantha Jach

Stories of interest

The Washington Post keeps losing Black journalists, Guild study says (Columbia Journalism Review)

By KRISTEN CHICK

A REPORT RELEASED WEDNESDAY by the Washington Post Newspaper Guild shows that the Post is struggling to retain Black employees. The union's study on pay, diversity, and retention—which covers 2016 to mid-2021 and includes non-newsroom staff—shows that Black employees and people of color are leaving the company at disproportionately high rates: in 2020, more than one in three Guild-eligible journalists who left the newsroom were Black, despite Black journalists' making up just 9.2 percent of newsroom employees that year.

The Post did hire more journalists of color in recent years: while in 2017 just 17 percent of new hires were people of color, in 2020 and the first half of 2021, 52 percent of new hires were people of color. But in the same period, 45 percent of those who left the newsroom were people of color, even though they made up just 22 percent of the newsroom. And fewer than one in five of those hired in 2020 were Black.

A companion report by the Guild's Black Caucus, drawing on interviews with more than thirty current and former employees, describes how Black journalists were underpaid, devalued in their work, stymied in their career growth, and faced with indifference or hostility in pushing for better coverage of communities of color and for diversity in the company.

Read more [here](#).

Pay, Diversity and Retention at The Post

By members of The Washington Post Guild, April 13, 2022

We began this project nearly two years ago, as our world, nation and workplace were wrestling with the questions that have come to define our recent history.

What does true fairness look like? Whose voices deserve to be centered? What is the purpose of diversity if it doesn't come with inclusion and investment? How do we change our systems — and ourselves — to best serve our mission and one another?

We, the members of The Washington Post Guild, grappled with these questions as we personally and professionally navigated news events labeled over and over as unprecedented: a devastating pandemic, an uprising over unjust policing, a presidential election, an insurrection, and the systemic racism and sexism each exposed.

Through it all, most of us were working from home — both isolating us from our critical support networks and giving us the space to process painful realizations about the ways in which our own institution perpetuates these same inequities.

This project is meant to explore them and offer a blueprint for true change.

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

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House G.O.P., Banding Together, Kills Bid to Honor Pioneering Black Judge (New York Times)

By Annie Karni

WASHINGTON — In a bitterly divided Congress, it was a rare measure that had been expected to sail through without a fight.

A bill to name a federal courthouse in Tallahassee after Justice Joseph W. Hatchett, the first Black man to serve on the Florida Supreme Court — sponsored by the state's two Republican senators and backed unanimously by its 27 House members — was set to pass the House last month and become law with broad bipartisan support.

But in a last-minute flurry, Republicans abruptly pulled their backing with no explanation and ultimately killed the measure, leaving its fate unclear, many of its champions livid and some of its newfound opponents professing ignorance about what had happened.

Asked what made him vote against a measure that he had co-sponsored, Representative Vern Buchanan, Republican of Florida, was brief and blunt: "I don't know," he said.

The real answer is as much an allegory about the state of House Republicans in 2022 as it is about a federal building in Florida. With little notice and nothing more than a 23-year-old news clipping, a right-wing, first-term congressman mounted an 11th-hour effort on the House floor to persuade his colleagues that Judge Hatchett, a trailblazing judge who broke barriers as the first Black State Supreme Court justice south of the Mason-Dixon line, was undeserving of being honored.

The objector was Representative Andrew Clyde of Georgia. Shortly before the House vote, he began circulating [an Associated Press article](#) from 1999 about an appeals court decision that Judge Hatchett wrote that year that struck down a public school policy allowing student-approved prayers at graduation ceremonies in Florida. The decision, which overruled a lower court, held that the policy violated constitutional protections of freedom of religion.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Michael Putzel, who noted "Rep. Andrew Clyde, R-Ga., used an AP story from 1999 to torpedo a bill to honor Florida's first Black Supreme Court justice."

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Tesla CEO Elon Musk offers to buy Twitter for \$43 billion (AP)

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN

Tesla CEO Elon Musk is offering to buy Twitter, saying the social media platform he has criticized for not living up to free speech principles needs to be transformed as a private company.

Twitter Inc. said in a regulatory filing on Thursday that Musk, currently the company's biggest shareholder, has proposed buying the remaining shares of Twitter that he doesn't already own at \$54.20 per share, an offer worth more than \$43 billion.

Musk called that price his best and final offer, although he provided no details on financing. The offer is non-binding and subject to financing and other conditions.

“I invested in Twitter as I believe in its potential to be the platform for free speech around the globe, and I believe free speech is a societal imperative for a functioning democracy,” Musk said in the filing. “However, since making my investment I now realize the company will neither thrive nor serve this societal imperative in its current form. Twitter needs to be transformed as a private company.”

Read more [here](#).

Today in History - April 14, 2022



By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, April 14, the 104th day of 2022. There are 261 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 14, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln was shot and mortally wounded by John Wilkes Booth during a performance of “Our American Cousin” at Ford’s Theatre in Washington.

On this date:

In 1828, the first edition of Noah Webster’s “American Dictionary of the English Language” was published.

In 1902, James Cash Penney opened his first store, The Golden Rule, in Kemmerer, Wyoming.

In 1912, the British liner RMS Titanic collided with an iceberg in the North Atlantic at 11:40 p.m. ship’s time and began sinking. (The ship went under two hours and 40 minutes later with the loss of 1,514 lives.)

In 1910, President William Howard Taft became the first U.S. chief executive to throw the ceremonial first pitch at a baseball game as the Washington Senators beat the Philadelphia Athletics 3-0.

In 1935, the “Black Sunday” dust storm descended upon the central Plains, turning a sunny afternoon into total darkness.

In 1949, the “Wilhelmstrasse Trial” in Nuremberg ended with 19 former Nazi Foreign Office officials sentenced by an American tribunal to prison terms ranging from four to 25 years.

In 1960, Tamla Records and Motown Records, founded by Berry Gordy Jr., were incorporated as Motown Record Corp.

In 1981, the first test flight of America’s first operational space shuttle, the Columbia, ended successfully with a landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1994, two U.S. Air Force F-15 warplanes mistakenly shot down two U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters over northern Iraq, killing 26 people, including 15 Americans.

In 1999, NATO mistakenly bombed a convoy of ethnic Albanian refugees; Yugoslav officials said 75 people were killed.

In 2007, riot police beat and detained protesters as thousands defied an official ban and attempted to stage a rally in Moscow against Russian President Vladimir Putin’s government.

In 2020, President Donald Trump announced that he was cutting off U.S. payments to the U.N. health agency, the World Health Organization; Trump said it had not done enough to stop the coronavirus from spreading.

Ten years ago: In Belfast, Northern Ireland, where the RMS Titanic was built, thousands attended a choral requiem at the Anglican St. Anne’s Cathedral or a nationally televised concert at the city’s Waterfront Hall to mark the 100th anniversary of the ship’s sinking. Eleven Secret Service agents were placed on administrative leave as a deepening scandal involving prostitutes overshadowed President Barack Obama’s diplomatic mission to Latin America.

Five years ago: Former NFL star Aaron Hernandez, already serving a life sentence for a 2013 murder, was acquitted in Boston in a 2012 double slaying prosecutors said was fueled by his anger over a drink spilled at a nightclub. (Five days later, Hernandez hanged himself in his prison cell.)

One year ago: A white former suburban Minneapolis police officer, Kim Potter, was charged with second-degree manslaughter for killing 20-year-old Black motorist Daunte Wright in a shooting that ignited days of unrest. (Potter, who said she confused her handgun for her Taser, was convicted of first- and second-degree manslaughter and sentenced to two years in prison.) President Joe Biden said he would withdraw the 2,500 remaining U.S. troops from Afghanistan, with the drawdown to begin by May 1; that date had been the deadline for full withdrawal under a peace agreement that the Trump administration reached with the Taliban in

2020. Bernard Madoff, the infamous architect of an epic securities swindle, died at a federal prison in North Carolina; he was 82. Carlos Rodón threw the second no-hitter of the young baseball season, losing his bid for a perfect game on a hit batter with one out in the ninth inning, and the Chicago White Sox cruised to an 8-0 victory over the Cleveland Indians.

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Loretta Lynn is 90. Actor Julie Christie is 82. Retired MLB All-Star Pete Rose is 81. Rock musician Ritchie Blackmore is 77. Actor John Shea is 74. Actor Peter Capaldi is 64. Actor-turned-race car driver Brian Forster is 62. Actor Brad Garrett is 62. Actor Robert Carlyle is 61. Rock singer-musician John Bell (Widespread Panic) is 60. Actor Robert Clendenin is 58. Actor Catherine Dent is 57. Actor Lloyd Owen is 56. Baseball Hall of Famer Greg Maddux is 56. Rock musician Barrett Martin is 55. Actor Anthony Michael Hall is 54. Actor Adrien Brody is 49. Classical singer David Miller (Il Divo) is 49. Rapper Da Brat is 48. Actor Antwon Tanner is 47. Actor Sarah Michelle Gellar is 45. Actor-producer Rob McElhenney is 45. Roots singer JD McPherson is 45. Rock singer Win Butler (Arcade Fire) is 42. Actor Claire Coffee is 42. Actor Christian Alexander is 32. Actor Nick Krause is 30. Actor Vivien Cardone is 29. Actor Graham Phillips is 29. Actor Skyler Samuels is 28. Actor Abigail Breslin is 26.

Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that focuses on retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013 and 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 Midwest 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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