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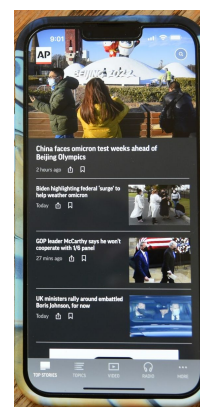
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Connecting

Dec. 15, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this Dec. 15, 2023,

The responses were nearly immediate to the call in Thursday's Connecting for colleagues to share suggestions to make charitable contributions for nonprofit journalism organizations that need support.

So with no further ado, we lead today's issue with those responses, listed in alphabetical order. And ironically, today is a significant anniversary for our news industry: On Dec. 15, 1791, the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution, went into effect following ratification by Virginia.

We anticipate hearing from more of you about other organizations that would qualify for this listing, so please send them along. I will run for the next few issues a compilation of responses that is updated with further input from you.

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

Paul

Nonprofit journalism organizations needing your support

Associated Press Donations

The Associated Press has created a means for accepting donations directly from its readers, who are told: “Your donation will help The Associated Press continue its mission to advance the power of fact-based journalism.” Such notifications appear on the home page of AP’s news site - <https://apnews.com/>. A donation is not tax deductible.

In a staff announcement, the AP called it “the exciting next step in AP’s direct to audience efforts: accepting reader donations in support of AP’s fact-based, independent journalism” and continued, “We are pleased to be rolling out this feature on APNews.com with a simple call to donate at the top of the page that reads, ‘Even when the news is free, journalism is not.’ If a reader wants to contribute, they can choose a dollar amount for their one-time donation and complete the transaction electronically through a third-party vendor. We want to be clear that accepting donations has no impact on AP’s independence. Those who donate will have no influence on the news report, nor will they receive any special access or benefits. It’s important that we offer a way -- similar to other news organizations -- for readers to support independent, fact-based journalism.”

Associated Press Relief Fund

The Associated Press Emergency Relief Fund, an independent 501(c)(3), has provided quick cash relief to staffers and their families who have been adversely affected by conflict or natural disasters — beyond insurance or the assistance that AP offers. In the decade since its establishment in 2005 following Hurricane Katrina, the fund has distributed nearly 50 grants totaling over \$250,000 — all thanks to the generosity of fellow AP colleagues and others who revere AP.

The fund has helped rebuild houses for staffers in Myanmar after a devastating cyclone, repair and replace cars for staff in Baghdad whose vehicles were destroyed by bombs and provide rental assistance for several people in our New York headquarters after Hurricane Sandy. In one instance, after the Taliban invaded a region of Afghanistan and threatened residents, the fund provided money for a staffer there to move his family to safety. In 2020, grants went to staffers whose homes were significantly damaged by the port explosion in Beirut. Contributions are tax-deductible. Click [here](#) to donate.

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BirminghamWatch!

Your gift today supports the editors, reporters and photographers who make BirminghamWatch a trusted, non-partisan source for local news. Founded in 2015, BirminghamWatch seeks to fill important gaps in coverage of city and county government, education and health care inequities.

We know you read BirminghamWatch – and we thank you. If you value this critical reporting, will you commit to a monthly gift today? Click [here](#) to donate.

(Shared by Mark Mittelstadt)

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First Amendment Coalition

Juliet Williams - I love the idea of nominating worthwhile organizations for our end-of-year giving! I want to recommend the [First Amendment Coalition](#), on whose board I serve as vice president. This advocacy group often jumps into action to protect government transparency, free expression and freedom of the press when politicians, courts and others seek to block their access. Recently, a FAC attorney quickly wrote a letter [protesting the exclusion of a journalist](#) from a press conference by the Alameda County district attorney's office and its attempt to restrict future access -- a decision that has been overturned in the face of the public outrage that ensued.

FAC also operates a [free legal hotline](#) that any journalist can call for timely answers to their questions about public records, court access, meetings and other First Amendment issues and regularly offers free legal training to independent journalists and those from smaller newsrooms that may not otherwise have access to robust professional training. Donate [here](#)!

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Florida First Amendment Foundation

Dear Friends of Democracy: Florida is ground zero for the advocates of secrecy in government, attacks on press freedom and rights of expression. As goes Florida, so goes the nation. The Florida First Amendment Foundation is on the front lines, educating all levels of government and news media about government transparency, and is fighting in the legislative trenches against the ever-increasing number of exemptions to public records and open meetings. Just today, we saw in the [Washington Post](#) about what happens to government officials who seek to comply with open-records laws. Please help us in this noble calling and dedicate some of your charitable contributions to the First Amendment Foundation. We are a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that has been fighting for open government since 1985. Donate [here](#).

(Shared by Edward Birk)

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Healthy NewsWorks

Ted Duncombe - [Healthy NewsWorks](#) is a nonprofit health-focused journalism program for children ages 5 to 14 in the Philadelphia area. My wife, former Philadelphia Inquirer health reporter Marian Uhlman, cofounded the organization 20 years ago. I help out with volunteer editing and other projects, as have several other AP and Inquirer alumni over the years. The program teaches basic concepts such as how to distinguish fact from opinion, identify credible sources and ask questions that get below the surface. The students then produce newspapers, books, a magazine and videos for their school communities. As a fourth grader in the program said, "Being a reporter isn't just interviewing and writing stories. It is about being able to listen to someone and finding the most important things they said and turning it into a story." Healthy NewsWorks recently started a three-year Building a Healthy Future campaign to raise \$1 million to enable it to double the number of students it reaches annually to nearly 3,000 in the next few years. To donate, click [here](#).

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InDepthNH.org

Adolphe Bernotas - My suggestion: For several years I have been making modest monthly checking account withdrawal contributions to the New Hampshire Center for Public Interest Journalism. Its [website](#) It is an outstanding operation of fearless journalism worthy of Connecting colleagues' support. InDepthNH.org, the nonprofit watchdog news website published by the New Hampshire Center for Public Interest Journalism. [Please donate here](#). We believe that vigorous, in-depth news coverage focused on government and public servants is the bedrock of a thriving democracy. We promise to hold government accountable. Our goal is to foster civil debate and spur citizens to action in a way that will make government more responsive to its citizens. InDepthNH.org is published by the New Hampshire Center for Public Interest Journalism and is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

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Institute for Nonprofit News

Al Cross - Thanks for the opportunity to "rattle the tin cup," as some community newspaper publishers perhaps still say when calling up advertisers to do a sponsor page for some local observance.

First, I advise prospective givers to see if the news organization is part of the Institute for Nonprofit News' NewsMatch program, which makes a 1-for-1 match of donations up to \$1,000 during November and December each year, subject to a match limit calculated for each organization. The limit is \$15,000 for Kentucky Health News, which

I edit and publish, heretofore with funds from the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky. We can only afford a part-time reporter, and we need to make the position full-time, because there are many health issues in Kentucky, a state with low overall health status, and in many on many topics there is lots of misinformation. So, we joined INN and are getting donations that will be matched. You can see what we're doing at KyHealthNews.org and donate [here](#).

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Marblehead (MA) Current

Ed Bell - Before year's end I would like to put in a plug for the [Marblehead \(MA\) Current](#). We launched online a week before local elections in the Spring of 2022 as a 501(c)3 non profit after our town was abandoned by Gannett. Our weekly print edition followed Thanksgiving week of the same year. We are in the process of completing our Newsmatch fundraiser. The Institute for Nonprofit News (INN) currently headed by Sue Cross, will match our donations up to \$15,000. Needless to say, we live paycheck to paycheck. If any of our Connecting colleagues needs a year-end tax deduction, checks can be made to the Marblehead News Group, 217 Humphrey St., Marblehead, MA 01945.

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National Parks Traveler

Rita Beamish - I'd like to suggest an extremely worthy and widely read nonprofit journalism organization that is in dire need of donations. [National Parks Traveler](#) will close its doors early next year after 18 years of operation if it does not get an influx toward a sustainability path. [National Parks Traveler](#) – the name fails to encompass its range of meaty news – exclusively covers news and [feature stories](#) about the national parks. Although these national treasures are the focus, the stories often center on issues like [climate change impacts](#), [endangered](#) and [invasive species](#), or native people and other [cultural topics](#), invariably reporting on important environmental and cultural themes that spill far beyond park boundaries.

NPT serves a close [watchdog](#) role when it comes to National Park Service and Interior Department administration, and we all know that this type of government accountability coverage is critically important as more and more news publications are shuttered due to financial woes.

It keeps tabs on where our taxpayer money goes, from highlighting [success stories](#) of the Great America Outdoors Act to delving the huge [maintenance backlog](#), and also serves consumer interest in spotlighting [lesser known parks](#), whether in a travelogue vein or a focus on important policy questions. And NPT covers just plain interesting topics, like the mystery of why a [specific large salmon species found its way](#) to a small California creek.

I urge donations to National Parks Traveler not just because I freelance for it but because its founder and talented editor-in-chief is one of our own former AP

colleagues, Kurt Repanshek, who maintains high journalistic standards. In addition to a daily news report, he produces companion [podcasts](#) and occasional [print publications](#).

If you want to support real-news journalism that has a uniquely insightful and informative role, you can help save National Parks Traveler.

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Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

The [Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press](#) provides pro bono legal representation, amicus curiae support, and other legal resources to protect First Amendment freedoms and the newsgathering rights of journalists. Donations to the Reporters Committee help to protect the right to gather and distribute news; to keep government accountable by ensuring access to public records, meetings, and courtrooms; and to preserve free speech and a free press, as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. If you have questions about supporting our work, please contact Director of Development Michael Zwirn at giving@rcfp.org.

Dodi Fromson said it would welcome your contributions at any time in the year. It was created and founded by her late husband Murray Fromson and 53 years later, it is doing spectacular work for journalists who require professional help, extended to them pro bono. Large contributions by the Knight Foundation have made it possible to open offices of RCFP with lawyers in five other states in the US.

(Shared by Dodi Fromson)

AP photo librarian reunion



[Wendy Davis Beard](#) – Here's an image of two AP photo librarians, later AP photo editors in 50 Rock, meeting Wednesday on Jurassic Coast in the UK. Stephanie Berger (far left) meets Wendy Davis Beard, second from left, in Lyme Regis, a historic fishing village, with her husband Paul King, director of Production Park Avenue Armoury, NYC, and far right, John Beard, artist.

Santa in danger of being cancelled ... can the AP save him?

A press release received in AP New York with that heading, above headline, that goes on:

Children's author and Chicagoan Todd Zimmermann is concerned about a growing trend of disbelief in Santa Claus but he's putting parents on the naughty list, not their innocent children.

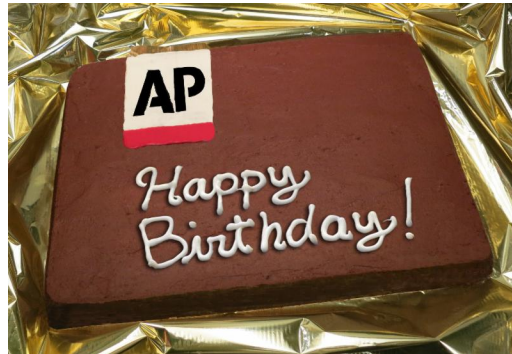
Zimmermann is trying to get a message out to parents who aren't letting Santa into their holiday season that while they may be well-meaning, they're short-changing the kiddoes. And, he points out that new research shows their concerns are misplaced, anyway.

Zimmermann first began reading his Christmas-themed books to children in 2015. In all of his first seven years reading to (10,000+ children in total) he'd never had parents tell them they were not telling their children about the "lie" of Santa Claus.

Etc...

(Shared by Leanne Italie)

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Mavis Amundson](#)

[John Strachan](#)

On Sunday to...

[Jane Anderson](#)

[Susanne Shaw](#)

Stories of interest

Russian court extends detention of Wall Street Journal reporter Gershkovich until end of January (AP)

MOSCOW (AP) — A court in Moscow on Tuesday extended the detention of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, arrested on espionage charges, until Jan. 30, Russian news agencies reported.

The hearing took place behind closed doors because authorities say details of the criminal case against the American journalist are classified.

Gershkovich, 32, was detained in March while on a reporting trip to the Russian city of Yekaterinburg, about 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) east of Moscow. Russia's Federal Security Service alleged that the reporter, "acting on the instructions of the American

side, collected information constituting a state secret about the activities of one of the enterprises of the Russian military-industrial complex.”

Read more [here](#).

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‘Nowhere Is Safe in Gaza’: Clarissa Ward Gains Unprecedented New Access to Gaza’s ‘Humanitarian Catastrophe’ in Harrowing Report (MEDIAite)

Jamie Frevele

CNN chief international correspondent Clarissa Ward has been reporting on the scene since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas War. In a stunning report that aired Thursday on CNN, Ward gave viewers an even closer look inside the “humanitarian catastrophe” in Gaza, going inside a field hospital that was set up by the United Arab Emirates for an unflinching story of human suffering. CNN was the first Western news outlet to be granted this kind of access.

Ward’s report begins on a dour note: “You don’t have to search for tragedy in Gaza. It finds you on every street strewn with trash and stagnant water, desolate and foreboding.” And the misery continues once Ward is off the street and inside the hospital. At times, Ward becomes visibly emotional while speaking with severely wounded patients, including young children and babies, but the most prominent emotion on display from the reporter and the people around her was frustration:

Read more [here](#).

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The Southern Illinoian was sold. Then the new owner eliminated its entire news staff (STL/PR)

By Danny Wicentowski

Jackson Brandhorst was barely out of high school when he started working as a clerk at the Southern Illinoian newspaper. Based in Carbondale, the paper was Brandhorst’s hometown source of news.

He spent the next four years working his way up. He was promoted to columnist, then copy editor, then assistant editor. In 2022, at the age of 21, he was named the paper’s editor-in-chief.

But there was a different story brewing.

Less than a year after taking the reins, Brandhorst faced his staff with bad news: The paper’s owner, Lee Enterprises, had sold the Southern to Paxton Media Group. The

paper's new owner announced the acquisition in October, promising it would expand coverage in the region and "work hard" to sustain the trust the Southern had earned from the community.

What Paxton didn't state publicly was its plans to eliminate the paper's existing employees. First reported by the United Media Guild and the Unions of Lee Enterprises, the layoffs hit the Southern's entire unionized staff of 10.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Scott Charton.

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Why one of these 12 teams will win the national title (ESPN)

John Gasaway

As of this week, we may know which 12 Division I men's college basketball teams are still in contention to win the 2024 national championship. Emphasis on "may."

This is because the last 19 national champions have all been ranked in the top 12 in their respective season's Week 6 AP poll. In fact, Week 6 has outperformed polls from any other week over those nearly two decades, in terms of spotting the soon-to-be champion.

Beginning with the 2003-04 season, the average Week 6 ranking of the eventual national champion has been 4.7. No other week throughout the season ranks the eventual winner so highly, not even polls from March (e.g., Week 17, which averages out to 7.3).

Congratulations are therefore in order for the following teams, the top 12 in this season's Week 6 AP poll:

Read more [here](#). Shared by John Lumpkin, who noted, "The unerring accuracy of the AP Week 6 poll."

Today in History - Dec. 15, 2023



Today is Friday, Dec. 15, the 349th day of 2023. There are 16 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 15, 1791, the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution, went into effect following ratification by Virginia.

On this date:

In 1890, Sioux Indian Chief Sitting Bull and 11 other tribe members were killed in Grand River, South Dakota, during a confrontation with Indian police.

In 1939, the Civil War motion picture epic "Gone with the Wind," starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable, had its world premiere in Atlanta.

In 1944, a single-engine plane carrying bandleader Glenn Miller, a major in the U.S. Army Air Forces, disappeared over the English Channel while en route to Paris.

In 1967, the Silver Bridge between Gallipolis (gal-ih-puh-LEES'), Ohio, and Point Pleasant, West Virginia, collapsed into the Ohio River, killing 46 people.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter announced he would grant diplomatic recognition to Communist China on New Year's Day and sever official relations with Taiwan.

In 1989, a popular uprising began in Romania that resulted in the downfall of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu (chow-SHEHS'-koo).

In 2000, the long-troubled Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine was closed for good.

In 2001, with a crash and a large dust cloud, a 50-foot tall section of steel — the last standing piece of the World Trade Center's facade — was brought down in New York.

In 2011, the flag used by U.S. forces in Iraq was lowered in a low-key Baghdad airport ceremony marking the end of a war that had left 4,500 Americans and 110,000 Iraqis dead and cost more than \$800 billion.

In 2012, a day after the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, investigators worked to understand what led the 20-year-old gunman to slaughter 26 children and adults after also killing his mother and before taking his own life. In his Saturday radio address, President Barack Obama declared that “every parent in America has a heart heavy with hurt” and said it was time to “take meaningful action to prevent more tragedies like this.”

In 2013, Nelson Mandela was laid to rest in his childhood hometown, ending a 10-day mourning period for South Africa’s first Black president.

In 2016, a federal jury in Charleston, South Carolina, convicted Dylann Roof of slaughtering nine Black church members who had welcomed him to their Bible study.

In 2020, the Food and Drug Administration cleared the first kit that consumers could buy without a prescription to test themselves for COVID-19 entirely at home. After weeks of holding out, Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Joe Biden on winning the presidential election.

In 2021, former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin pleaded guilty to a federal charge of violating George Floyd’s civil rights, admitting for the first time that he held his knee across Floyd’s neck and kept it there even after Floyd became unresponsive, resulting in the Black man’s death.

Today’s Birthdays: Singer Cindy Birdsong (The Supremes) is 84. Rock musician Dave Clark (The Dave Clark Five) is 81. Rock musician Carmine Appice (Vanilla Fudge) is 77. Actor Don Johnson is 74. Actor Melanie Chartoff is 73. Movie director Julie Taymor is 71. Movie director Alex Cox is 69. Rock musician Paul Simonon (The Clash) is 68. Movie director John Lee Hancock is 67. Democratic Party activist Donna Brazile is 64. Country singer Doug Phelps (Brother Phelps; Kentucky Headhunters) is 63. Movie producer-director Reginald Hudlin is 62. Actor Helen Slater is 60. Actor Paul Kaye (TV: “Game of Thrones”) is 59. Actor Molly Price is 58. Actor Garrett Wang (wahng) is 55. Actor Michael Shanks is 53. Actor Stuart Townsend is 51. Figure skater Surya Bonaly is 50. Actor Geoff Stults is 47. Actor Adam Brody is 44. Actor Michelle Dockery is 42. Actor George O. Gore II is 41. Actor Camilla Luddington is 40. Rock musician and actor Alana Haim (HYM) is 32. Actor Maude Apatow (AP’-ih-tow) is 26. Actor Stefania Owen is 26.

Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that reaches more than 1,800 retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013. Past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Central Region vice president based in Kansas City.

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

to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:

- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.

- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.

- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.

- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.

- **"A silly mistake that you make"**- a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.

- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

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

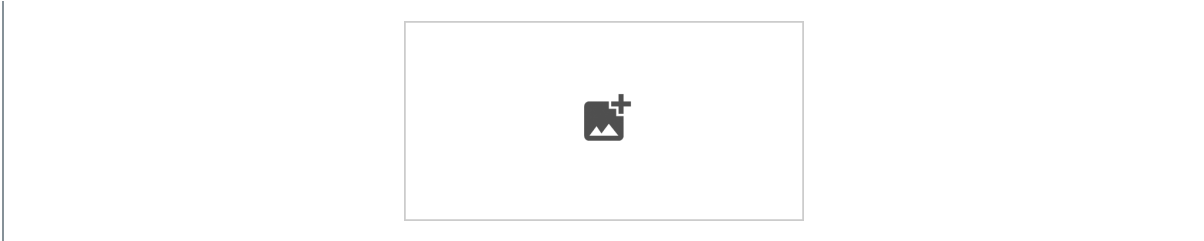


Paul Stevens

Editor, Connecting newsletter

paulstevens46@gmail.com





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