

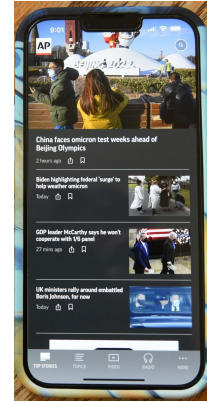
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Connecting

Dec. 20, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this Dec. 20, 2023,

How many AP grads have become U.S. ambassadors?

Roger Nyhus is one – as our colleague [Dan Day](#) shares:

Roger Nyhus, who worked briefly for the AP in the Pacific Northwest before beginning a successful communications and public affairs career, has been confirmed by the U.S. Senate as ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. President Biden nominated Nyhus for the role.



After graduating from Washington State University, Nyhus joined the AP in 1991 at Olympia for legislative relief, later working relief roles in Seattle and Juneau. His LinkedIn profile has details on his years in the communications business, during most of which he ran his own company based in Seattle. Click [here](#) for a story in the Seattle Times.

Here’s to a great day ahead – be safe, stay healthy, live it to your fullest.

Paul

Thousands of lights at Chicago Botanic Garden illuminate tunnels, lilies and art





[Charlie Arbogast](#) – Chicago Botanic Garden is dazzling patrons and visitors from around the world with its fifth annual holiday display of light and music: Lightscape. Clusters of multi-generational households push strollers, carry children and walk arm in arm with older relatives as they navigate the 1.3-mile (2.1-kilometer) experience in the village of Glencoe, near Chicago.

More than 22 light installations by various local and international artists light a path through established gardens that snake around the Great Basin in the core of the garden's 385 acres.

Highlights of the experience include passing through the "Electric Ribbon Tunnel" created by Culture Creative; "Sea of Light," created by UK artist Ithaca, which has 4,800 individually controlled balls of LED light; "Lilies," by UK artist Jigantics, with 22 illuminated 5-foot (1.5-meter) lilies that float in and around the darkness of the Great Basin; and "Laser Lake," projecting a rainbow of light dancing across the Great Basin.

A crowd favorite, "Winter Cathedral," features a cathedral window arch of 100,000 lights that extends along a 110-foot (33.5-meter) tunnel at the end of your journey.

Click [here](#) for the AP story I wrote and illustrated.

Remembering Larry Knutson

[Robert Burns](#) - I doubt that anything I say about Larry Knutson would do justice to his memory, but I feel compelled to recall his terrific journalistic instincts, his legendary knowledge of American history, his collegiality, and his elegant writing style. It was a great pleasure to cover presidential trips with him and to learn from his example. He carried himself with such dignity — confident yet humble. May he Rest In Peace.

Remembering John Van Gieson

David Powell - John Van Gieson and I met on the job in 1976 when we both worked in the Tallahassee bureau and I on the desk in Miami. Later that year, John was named correspondent in charge of the Tallahassee bureau, and I transferred in as the bureau's junior reporter. If I ever amounted to anything as a reporter, it was due largely to John and what he taught me. Tallahassee was known then as a "writing bureau" because the work was strictly reporting, mostly on government and politics, with no editing chores. It was a great assignment.

John taught me most of what I learned about working a beat. He taught that relationships were the coin of the realm in reporting, as they are in life. He said, "It's amazing what people will do for you out of friendship." John was man of contradictions, a gentle and soft-spoken man who also was a fierce competitor in our daily battles with UPI. As with the many statehouse reporters from Florida's prosperous newspapers in those days, we were all friends with the UPI team and socialized at press corps gatherings. But John taught that first and always, we were competitors.

John's time with the AP included the first years of Bobby Bowden's tenure as head football coach at Florida State University. John always assigned himself the coverage of FSU's home games. He loved that work. He always maintained proper decorum in the press box, where cheering is not allowed, but he knew he was onto a great running story as Bowden built FSU from a perennial loser into a national power. After Bowden's Seminoles began winning, covering home games became a prized assignment. The AP decided to fly a sportswriter from Miami to Tallahassee just to cover those games. John was disappointed but, on the other hand, he was freed to become the unabashed Seminole fan he remained for the rest of his life.

John and I were friends for 47 years, through our years working together and then through our respective career changes and the ups and downs of life. I will miss him very much and will always be grateful for his friendship.

The year in photos: AP's most memorable photos of 2023



Police stand outside Planalto Palace, the official workplace of Brazil's president in Brasilia, as seen through a shattered window after supporters of Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro stormed the building on Jan. 8, 2023. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)

BY TED ANTHONY

The mission of photojournalism is to capture moments that represent — and, at their best, truly reveal — the endless spectrum of the human experience.

Associated Press photographers across the world have spent 2023 doing exactly that — sometimes at great risk or personal exertion, always with ethics and compassion and quality, and with an eye forever trained toward the memorable.

When those photographers encounter the world, though — from Israel and Gaza to Brazil, from Mongolia to the American heartland and beyond — often they have no idea what they'll find until it is upon them.

Here is some of what they found in 2023, in all its contradictions: Conflict. Ambition. Anger. Injustice. Striving. Merriment. Poverty. Blood. The quest for excellence, no matter the arena. The human body, in glorious and panicked motion and, too often, sadly stilled. Struggle — to protect loved ones, to navigate a warming planet, to escape strife and oppression, to survive nature's capriciousness.

Death, life and more death — in all its unwelcome permutations. Bursts of joy in unexpected places. Tears upon tears upon tears. Wars that have just begun, wars that continue, wars already almost forgotten. The gamut of human existence.

Today, in a connected and absurdly complex world, a single year contains far more cataclysmic news than we can ever begin to process. Ways to make sense of it are

rare. But using technology to freeze moments — capturing them in unforgettable photography — offers a small chance to pause and say: At this particular hour in our civilization, this is what happened to us.

Read more [here](#).

AP-Washington videographer Mike Pesoli among them **NPF Names 20 Journalists for Paul Miller Fellowship 2024 Class**

The National Press Foundation has selected 20 journalists for the 2024 class of its prestigious Paul Miller Washington Reporting Fellowship, which has helped rising reporters navigate the complex landscape of Washington, D.C., for 35 years.

The class represents local and national news outlets, spanning print, digital, radio and television mediums.

In monthly sessions, fellows learn what it takes to cover the White House, Supreme Court, Capitol, Pentagon, Justice Department and other key government institutions.

Lawmakers, analysts and the top journalists in the business will lead discussions on policy, politics and best practices in reporting designed to help fellows thrive on their demanding beats. Equally important: it is an opportunity to network with colleagues to grow personally and professionally.

Read more [here](#).

AP Photobox



Seven AP staffers named Paul pose for a photo near St. Paul's Chapel in New York, Dec. 6, 2023. From left: Paul Memoli, account director; Paul Sarkis, associate general counsel; Paul Shanley, senior director of strategy; Paul Harloff, news editor; Paul Haven, vice president and head of global news gathering; Paul Caluori, vice president of global products; Paul Simoneschi, vice president of consumer product and technology. (Photo/Lyndsey Regis)



AP's White House team poses for a photo, Dec. 6, 2023, in the Blue Room during a holiday party for the press. Back row from left: Nancy Benac, Will Weissert, Seung Min Kim, Josh Boak, Zeke Miller, Chris Megerian, Amer Madhani. Front row: Darlene Superville, Colleen Long, Fatima Hussein. (Photo courtesy of Nancy Benac)



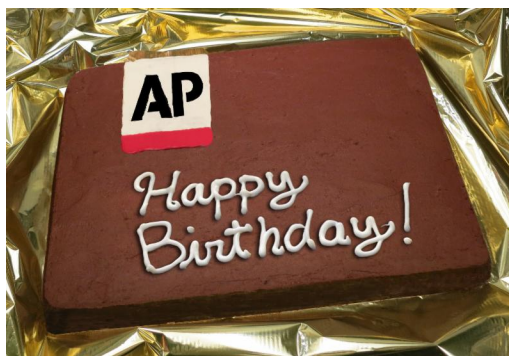
Dallas-based photographer Mat Otero films a giant brain coral 100 miles off the coast of Texas at the Flower Garden Bank National Marine Sanctuary, as part of a story about largely unknown pristine coral reefs found 60-90 feet underwater, atop a massive salt dome isolated in the Gulf of Mexico. (Photo courtesy of Andy Lewis)

It ain't over till it's borked



Neal Ulevich - The funny Yogi Bear headline (in Tuesday's Connecting) reminded me of the late Robert Bork, failed nominee to the Supreme Court in 1987. His misbegotten nomination made his surname into a verb. Lately he made a surprise appearance, by the pound, at my local supermarket.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Don Cooper](#)

[Lynn Elber](#)

Mary Clare Jalonick

Rik Stevens

Stories of interest

Nieman Lab. Predictions for Journalism, 2024

By PHILIP BUMP

No one knows what to do.

This is not a new development. No one has known what to do for quite some time. But it is nonetheless the case that no one knows what to do — what to do about distrust of traditional journalism, what to do about the crushing compost heap of biased “news” sources, how to reconcile that the latter is free and the former can’t be.

I often say that I got out of the habit of making predictions in November 2016, though that’s just a sort of tactless wink; I make predictions all the time. But I try to do so with care and caveats, less as predictions than as efforts to identify the sides of the die and, maybe, whether it’s loaded. So this will not be a presentation of predictions, as such, but instead a consideration of what must happen with journalism in 2024 — what to do at least in the microcosm.

The media must do better at defending itself.

For too long, traditional media outlets have seemingly extended the idea of observing the world from an objective distance to themselves, as though there’s something inappropriate or gauche about standing up for our own reporting. That sort of indifference, the refusal to give oxygen to criticism, was relatively effective for a long time, just as it generally worked for businesses and political actors.

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

-0-

Head of the Economist to take the reins at the Baltimore Banner (Washington Post)

By Elahe Izadi

Bob Cohn served as president of two prominent media companies with a combined 300 years of distinguished history — first, the Atlantic, and now, the Economist, a global affairs magazine with subscribers in more than 200 countries.

But in February, he will turn his focus to his own backyard of Baltimore as the chief executive of the Baltimore Banner, a nonprofit digital news outfit aiming to become an industry model for high-quality local journalism.

His marching orders: Build the Banner — which launched last year with a \$50 million, five-year pledge from the former hotel and health-care magnate Stewart Bainum Jr. — so that it can stand on its own.

“It’s an intellectual puzzle: how to create a sustainable business at scale for local news,” Bainum said. “It really hasn’t been done for a metro area. That’s what the goal is, and what he’s charged with.”

Read more [here](#). Shared by Myron Belkind, Michael Rubin, Carol Riha.

-0-

Ten defining events in news media in 2023 (The Fix)

Anton Protsiuk

The past year has not been as eventful for news media as the previous one. Many of the stories that defined 2023 — everything from Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine to the launch of ChatGPT — emerged in 2022 but are still unfolding with unclear end results.

That said, a lot has happened in the past twelve months. So, here’s a subjective list of ten 2023 events that defined European and global news media. It’s just a snapshot, not a comprehensive story of the past year; follow The Fix for more end-of-year coverage and analysis of longer-term trends.

Read more [here](#).

-0-

Americans trust friends and family more than media for election information (Washington Post)

Analysis by Philip Bump
National columnist

One of the more baffling things to emerge over the past few years is the stubbornness of nonsense about the 2020 election. It was not “stolen” from Donald Trump, nor was it “rigged” against him. Every effort to claim that there was massive fraud or that “the system” — or whatever intentionally vague descriptor you want to use — tricked 81 million people into backing Joe Biden has been shown to be baseless, if not ridiculous. Trump was less popular and got fewer votes and that was that.

But the idea that something more complicated and less defensible occurred remains omnipresent. Even last week, Trump elevated new nonsense alleging rampant fraud. It

found an audience, however modest.

New polling from YouGov, conducted for the Economist, offers insight into why. Asked who they trust for election information, Americans were much more likely to say "friends and family" than they were "poll results" or the "news media."

To be clear, Americans don't have a lot of confidence in any source of election information outside of their friends. Less than half trust polls and the media; only a quarter trust social media or campaigns themselves.

Read more [here](#).

The Final Word

RIP Gigi

[James Carlson](#) - My wife, Ellen, and I have owned and loved black standard poodles from when we got our first house in 1977, spotted an ad in the paper and adopted 5-month-old Ami from the farm where the breeder raised her. We've trained some to earn obedience titles but mostly just treasured them as companions.

Now we are living through the worst time -- our Gigi, our fifth poodle, died Dec. 10 after a gradual decline that accelerated over a month or so. This was the gentlest, friendliest dog anyone could know, but not without her challenges, especially the lifelong steroid supplements she needed after her Addison's disease surfaced and nearly killed her at 11 months old.



She's such a fixture around here that neighbors, store clerks and other dog walkers are shocked and saddened at her passing. It's not fun to break the news in holiday cards that the dog in the pictures we sent in all those past cards isn't with us anymore. A neighbor who moved to Dallas a couple years ago sent Gigi a card saying she hoped "you and your parents are well and safe." So she will join the mourners when she gets her card from us. But we're giving this message: "Our holidays are celebrating our Gigi's life. Thirteen years -- we wished for more."

I've written a bunch of dog-related songs over the years. One can be found on YouTube by Googling Talking Dogs Gigi.

Here's the last verse from another, "Danielle's song (She runs like the wind)":

"Now when we see the gulls soaring among the clouds,

*Or perched up high, watching us from above,
We feel the free spirits of those no longer around,
Telling us, it's OK, we'll see them again some day."*

Today in History - Dec. 20, 2023



Today is Wednesday, Dec. 20, the 354th day of 2023. There are 11 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 20, 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was completed as ownership of the territory was formally transferred from France to the United States.

On this date:

In 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union as all 169 delegates to a special convention in Charleston voted in favor of separation.

In 1864, Confederate forces evacuated Savannah, Georgia, as Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman nearly completed his "March to the Sea."

In 1945, the Office of Price Administration announced the end of wartime tire rationing, effective Jan. 1, 1946.

In 1963, the Berlin Wall was opened for the first time to West Berliners, who were allowed one-day visits to relatives in the Eastern sector for the holidays.

In 1987, more than 4,300 people were killed when the Doña Paz (DOHN'-yuh pahz), a Philippine passenger ship, collided with the tanker Vector off Mindoro island.

In 1989, the United States launched Operation Just Cause, sending troops into Panama to topple the government of Gen. Manuel Noriega.

In 1995, an American Airlines Boeing 757 en route to Cali, Colombia, slammed into a mountain, killing all but four of the 163 people aboard.

In 1999, the Vermont Supreme Court ruled that gay couples were entitled to the same benefits and protections as wedded heterosexual couples.

In 2001, the U.N. Security Council authorized a multinational force for Afghanistan.

In 2002, Trent Lott resigned as Senate Republican leader two weeks after igniting a political firestorm with racially charged remarks.

In 2005, a federal judge ruled that "intelligent design" could not be mentioned in biology classes in a Pennsylvania public school district, delivering a stinging attack on the Dover Area School Board.

In 2016, President Barack Obama designated the bulk of U.S.-owned waters in the Arctic Ocean and certain areas in the Atlantic Ocean as indefinitely off limits to future oil and gas leasing.

In 2017, Cardinal Bernard Law, the disgraced former archbishop of Boston, died in Rome at the age of 86; his failure to stop child molesters in the priesthood had triggered a crisis in American Catholicism.

Today's Birthdays: Original Mouseketeer Tommy Cole (TV: "The Mickey Mouse Club") is 82. Rock musician-music producer Bobby Colomby is 79. Rock musician Peter Criss is 78. Former U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue is 77. Psychic/illusionist Uri Geller is 77. Producer Dick Wolf ("Law & Order") is 77. Rock musician Alan Parsons is 75. Actor Jenny Agutter is 71. Actor Michael Badalucco is 69. Actor Blanche Baker is 67. Rock singer Billy Bragg is 66. Rock singer-musician Mike Watt (The Secondmen, Minutemen, FIREHOSE) is 66. Actor Joel Gretsch is 60. Country singer Kris Tyler is 59. Rock singer Chris Robinson is 57. Actor Nicole deBoer is 53. Movie director Todd Phillips is 53. Singer David Cook ("American Idol") is 41. Actor Jonah Hill is 40. Actor Bob Morley is 39. Singer JoJo is 33. Actor Colin Woodell is 32.

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.

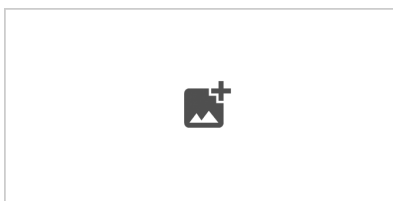
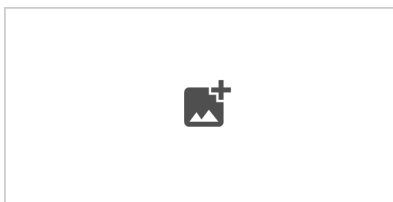
- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

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

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



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