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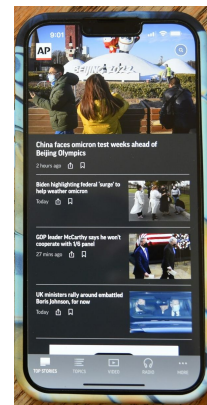
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Connecting

Jan. 3, 2024

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this Jan. 3, 2024,

And welcome to the first Connecting issue of the new year – after Ye Olde Connecting Editor took a little time away.

We’re sorry to begin with sad news of the death of our colleague **Arnold Zeitlin**, who was nearing 92 at the time of his death on Dec. 26. His friend **Henry Bradsher**, also a member of Connecting’s 90s group, brings you an obituary on a journalist who had an accomplished career with AP, UPI and as a journalism instructor.

Details on a memorial service to celebrate Arnold’s life will be provided shortly by the family. We’ll let you know in Connecting and you can also find information on his [blog page](#). If you wish to send any memories or comments to the family at [this address](#), it will post them on his blog.

Our colleague [David Tenenbaum](#) said: “I had the honor of working with Arnold at AP-Boston in the 80's. He had an amazing career but was incredibly modest about it. I will

miss him.”

Another member of our 90s Club, **Norm Abelson**, brings you his New Years Resolution in today's issue. We're blessed with his writing talents.

And we offer congratulations to one of AP's newest retirees, **Jim Baltzelle**, who is entering his third day in this wonderful new stage of life. Jim is former AP-Miami bureau chief and served as director of Local Media, Southeast, at the time of his retirement.

Got a favorite story to share about Jim? Send it along.

Here's to the year ahead – one in which I wish you good health, safe travels and the gift of living each day you're given to your fullest.

Paul

Arnold Zeitlin dies at 91; his was colorful career with AP, UPI and in education



Henry Bradsher - Arnold Zeitlin died peacefully in his sleep at his home in Northern Virginia on Dec. 26. The cause was heart failure. In his almost 92 years, he had had a colorful career first with AP, later UPI, teaching journalism in China, and in many other activities.

After a Peace Corps tour in West Africa, he became AP's bureau chief in Lagos, Nigeria. He moved in 1970 to Islamabad, Pakistan, to open the first AP bureau there, ending what had been in my time at AP New Delhi responsibility for all of South Asia, including Pakistan.

I first met him while reporting in Islamabad in 1970 for The Washington Star. Later he became AP's bureau chief in Manila, and then moved to Boston. He liked to joke that he was a splitter: covering Biafra's attempt to break away from Nigeria, East Pakistan's break to become Bangladesh, a Moslem part of Mindanao's attempt to secede from the Philippines, and, when in Boston, some small islands' talk of going from part of Massachusetts to become part of Rhode Island.

Arnold and I were reporting from East Pakistan when the Pakistani army cracked down on March 25, 1971, on the political movement there. He had left with me the phone number at friends he was visiting the evening when the army locked up the foreign press in the only hotel. I phoned him to stay away. It was only a day later that he was

caught and deported, as the rest of us had earlier been at gunpoint. I told my editors at the Star in my first uncensored account of the army action (sent from Bombay) to tell AP that Arnold was out of touch. AP then picked up my first-to-be-published account.

Leaving AP after Boston, he somehow became the UPI vice president for Asia, revisiting places he had earlier worked for AP. But UPI was failing, and after it collapsed Arnold taught (in English) journalism at a university in Guangzhou (formerly Canton) during an unfortunately brief period when investigative journalism was possible in China.

Arnold later settled in Northern Virginia. He attended talks in Washington on Asia subjects, writing up sensitive reports on them for many of us, reviewed books on Asia, and stayed intellectually active.

He had an impressive ability to make friends and remain in touch with a wide variety of people. When my elder son, Keith Bradsher, was reporting for The NY Times in Bangladesh, Arnold happened to be in Dhaka and very helpfully introduced Keith to many key people.

Arnold will be missed in many ways.

My New Year Resolution

[Norm Abelson](#) - I don't usually take my New Year resolutions very seriously. Generally, they are corny attempts at humor or solemn promises I know I will soon ignore. However, this year, with so many things the frightful way they are, I'm taking what I hope is a more meaningful approach. After many years, I will return to prayer.

I plan to start by each day reciting one prayerful request that things get just a little bit better for people everywhere whose lives are so much worse than mine. I have no expectation that my words alone will bring about change; but they will serve to keep me more aware. And perhaps move me to action, to do a bit better than I have done. After all, there is a specific requirement in my religion that we each leave the world a little better than we found it. Maybe prayers are a way to remind ourselves of that.

Prayers often begin by intoning: "Blessed art thou, oh Lord our God..." Do I believe in a God, one who is listening? If asked directly, I often cop out, saying I consider myself a wavering agnostic. But it has come to me of late that being a non-believer does not exclude the possibility that I may be wrong.

People say that it is irrational to believe in the concept of God, and I guess I have often gone along with that. On the other hand, what has a rationality, fed by greed and ego alone, brought forth on the earth?

In any case, my daily prayer may help me to grow, be grateful for my lot, and no matter how bad the shape of things, to keep a candle of grace, hope and compassion burning.

Jim Baltzelle retires from AP



ABOVE: Jim Baltzelle in St. Augustine in December.

RIGHT: Jim and Rebecca on their 38th wedding anniversary at Cafe Alcazar.

A staff note from AP Vice President/Local Markets [David Wilkison](#) on Dec. 28:

Please join me in congratulating Florida-based Account Director [Jim Baltzelle](#), who after nearly 20 years with The Associated Press retired Dec. 31.

Jim joined the AP in 2004 as an assistant bureau chief in Dallas, where he not only assisted with business in Texas but helped oversee news coverage in the region. While there, he was especially proud of leading a team that included the AP's Austin staff and Texas members on a package of stories that looked at the influence of the alcohol lobby and how hard it was to track votes in the Legislature.



Jim helped with coverage direction of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, where he maxed out his AP credit card on staff hotel rooms, johnboats, RVs, four-wheel drives and gas. Two weeks after Katrina made landfall, Jim was appointed interim chief of bureau for Louisiana and Mississippi before being named bureau chief in Miami a few months later. As the position gradually transitioned to one focused on business, he began working with members in South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama in 2016.

While in Miami, Jim worked to improve disaster prep, which became a model for other scenarios and bureaus. As part of that effort, Jim was asked by then-CEO Tom Curley to lead AP's response to help The Joplin (Missouri) Globe following a devastating tornado in 2011. Among other major stories, Jim helped cover the Gulf oil spill, the 2010 Haiti earthquake and the death of Anna Nicole Smith. As chief of bureau, Jim also was responsible for election race calling in Florida, which he has continued to do. Jim loved recruiting and his work on the intern selection committee.

From 2009 to 2015, Jim added to his portfolio the responsibility of working with customers in the Caribbean and helped create the Americas Report, which was a revenue success.

In 2010, Jim was named to Columbia University's Sulzberger Executive Leadership Program, where his project focused on AP's unique footprint in all 50 statehouses and helped establish the Legislative Topic Report as a product. That eventually led to a deal with a virtual school startup backed by billionaire Wayne Huizenga.

Jim helped relaunch AP Books in 2014 and worked with AP Productions, South Florida PBS and the Hispanic International Telecommunications Network on "Fauci: The Virus Hunter," a bilingual documentary released in 2021.

Jim has remained active in press freedom issues and is a past president of the Florida Society of News Editors and past chairman of the First Amendment Foundation.

Before joining AP, Jim was an editor known for watchdog and investigative work at the St. Augustine (Florida) Record; deputy metro editor of the Florida Times-Union in Jacksonville; executive editor of the Palatka (Florida) Daily News; and local news editor of the Ocala (Florida) Star-Banner, among other roles.

Jim was born in Miami, graduated from the University of Florida (where he wrote stories for Regional Director Adam Yeomans, who was then editor of the Independent Florida Gator) and lives in St. Augustine with his wife, Rebecca. They celebrated their 38th wedding anniversary Thursday and intend to spend time with their three grandchildren in the Gainesville area as Jim also focuses on golfing, fishing, working on his writing and playing guitar.

We will have a proper sendoff in the weeks ahead, but please join me in congratulating Jim and wishing him well in his retirement (you can reach him at jbaltzelle@comcast.net or 954.629.2117 after Sunday).

Nick Ut at US-Mexico border





Nick Ut – These are photos I took on New Year’s Eve when I went to the US and Mexico Border near Jacumba, San Diego. Many people arrive from Brazil, Columbia, Turkey and India. These pictures are of a family from Columbia across from Mexico Border to US.

Vietnamese lunch in LA



From left: Peter Arnett, Edie Lederer, Nick Ut, Kieu Chinh, Linda Deutsch.

[Edie Lederer](#) – I'm in California visiting Linda Deutsch and we had Vietnamese lunch with Nick Ut and Peter Arnett and Vietnamese-American actress Kieu Chinh.

AP Sighting



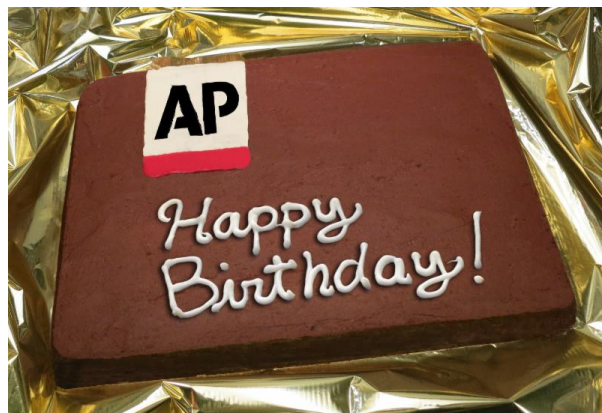
Brad Kalbfeld - From the opening scene in the Jean Harlow movie Platinum Blonde, released in 1931 and directed by Frank Capra.

Connecting sky shot – North Carolina



Joe Macenka - Sunset over Pamlico Sound, Hatteras Island, N.C.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday

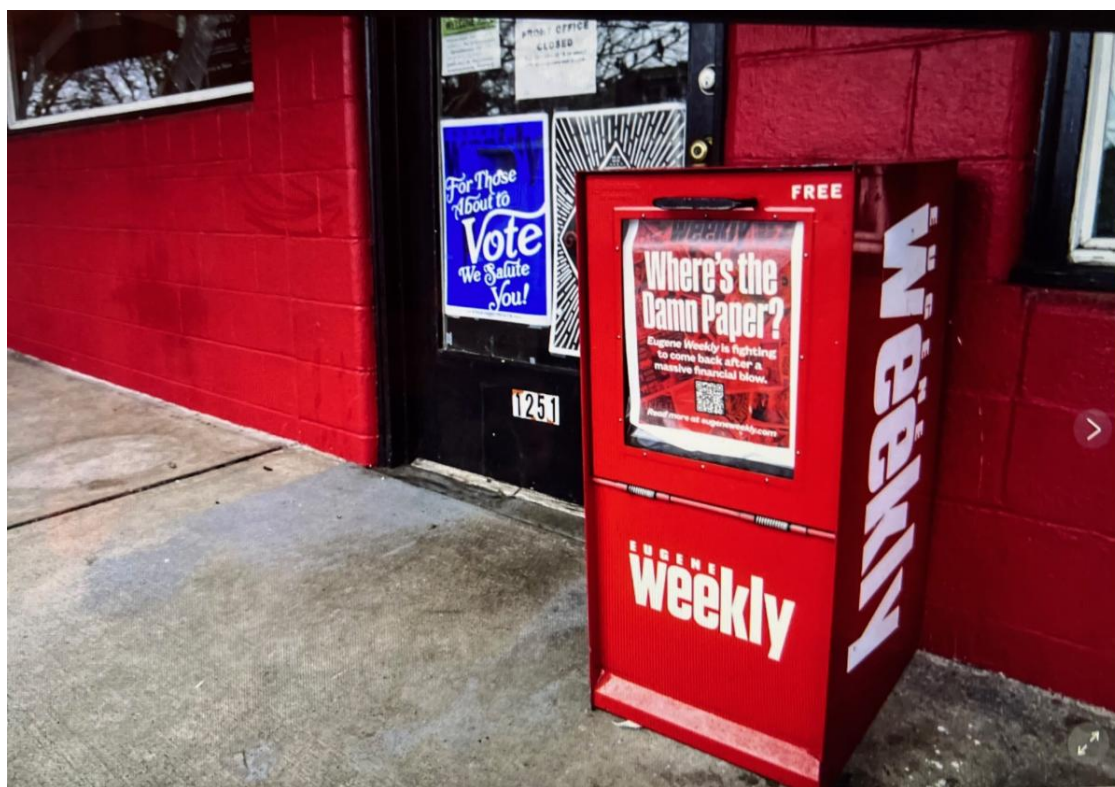


[Gary Sosniecki](#)

[Soll Sussman](#)

Stories of interest

Embezzlement of Oregon weekly newspaper's funds forces it to lay off entire staff and halt print (AP)



Todd Cooper via AP

BY CLAIRE RUSH

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — An Oregon weekly newspaper has had to lay off its entire staff and halt print after 40 years because its funds were embezzled by a former employee, its editor said, in a devastating blow to a publication that serves as an important source of information in a community that, like many others nationwide, is struggling with growing gaps in local news coverage.

About a week before Christmas, the Eugene Weekly found inaccuracies in its bookkeeping, editor Camilla Mortensen said. It discovered that a former employee who was “heavily involved” with the paper’s finances had used its bank account to pay themselves \$90,000 since at least 2022, she said.

The paper also became aware of at least \$100,000 in unpaid bills — including to the paper’s printer — stretching back several months, she said.

Additionally, multiple employees, including Mortensen, realized that money from their paychecks that was supposed to be going into retirement accounts was never deposited.

When the paper realized it couldn’t make the next payroll, it was forced to lay off all of its 10 staff members and stop its print edition, Mortensen said. The alternative weekly, founded in 1982, printed 30,000 copies each week to distribute for free in Eugene, the second-largest city in the state and home to the University of Oregon.

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

-0-

2 Post photographers put down their cameras after more than 203,000 images (Washington Post)

By Susan Levine and Natalia Jiménez-Stuard

Between the two of them, John McDonnell and Bill O’Leary have a combined 85 years of shooting photographs for The Washington Post. Theirs is a legacy rich in images of the nation’s capital as well as the country — some searing, some quirky, some iconic and some simply capturing a moment that otherwise would have gone unnoticed.

“An incredible privilege,” McDonnell says of the work he’s done, camera in hand.

With both journalists closing their careers at the end of 2023, we asked them to pull out a few favorite photos. The ones they picked are grounded in the Washington region, which seems appropriate since each man was born here and never left. Each landed at The Post by happenstance, not design. O’Leary came as a darkroom

technician and only planned on a short stint, but the energy of the newsroom, then powered by legendary editor Ben Bradlee, “was undeniably thrilling. It sucked me in.”

Exactly how many images these colleagues have published is impossible to figure; The Post’s online archives mostly represent the digital era, and McDonnell, who started in 1978, and O’Leary, who began in 1984, were shooting film long before that. But the following bridges the divide and the decades. It’s a fitting tribute.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Michael Rubin, Peggy Walsh.

-0-

Opinion: Palestinian and Israeli cartoonists see the war differently (and the same) (Washington Post)

By Ann Telnaes

During the long conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, editorial cartoonists throughout the world have expressed their opinions through their art. Though much powerful visual commentary has been created about Hamas’s Oct. 7 attack on Israel and the subsequent Israeli strikes and humanitarian crisis inside Gaza, I wanted to hear from cartoonists with a direct connection to the war — and to show these points of views side by side.

So I reached out to Michel Kichka, an Israeli who did the cartoon at the top of this article, and Mohammad Sabaaneh, a Palestinian who created the cartoon below, inspired by Pablo Picasso’s painting “Guernica.”

I got to know both cartoonists several years ago at international conferences. Both are thoughtful and talented artists, and I respect them as colleagues and consider them friends. Although their perspectives on the war are different, the work they shared shows compassion and an acute respect for civil rights and justice.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Sibby Christensen.

-0-

Inside the News Industry’s Uneasy Negotiations With OpenAI (New York Times)

By Benjamin Mullin

For months, some of the biggest players in the U.S. media industry have been in confidential talks with OpenAI on a tricky issue: the price and terms of licensing their content to the artificial intelligence company.

The curtain on those negotiations was pulled back this week when The New York Times sued OpenAI and Microsoft for copyright infringement, alleging that the

companies used its content without permission to build artificial intelligence products.

The Times said that before suing, it had been talking with the companies for months about a deal. And it was not alone. Other news organizations — including Gannett, the largest U.S. newspaper company; News Corp, the owner of The Wall Street Journal; and IAC, the digital colossus behind The Daily Beast and the magazine publisher Dotdash Meredith — have been in talks with OpenAI, said three people familiar with the negotiations, who requested anonymity to discuss the confidential talks.

The News/Media Alliance, which represents more than 2,200 news organizations in North America, has also been talking with OpenAI about coming up with a framework for a deal that would suit its members, a person familiar with the talks said.

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

The Final Word



Today in History - Jan. 3, 2024



Today is Wednesday, Jan. 3, the third day of 2024. There are 363 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 3, 1959, Alaska became the 49th state as President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a proclamation.

On this date:

In 1777, Gen. George Washington's army routed the British in the Battle of Princeton, New Jersey.

In 1861, more than two weeks before Georgia seceded from the Union, the state militia seized Fort Pulaski at the order of Gov. Joseph E. Brown. The Delaware House and Senate voted to oppose secession from the Union.

In 1868, the Meiji Restoration re-established the authority of Japan's emperor and heralded the fall of the military rulers known as shoguns.

In 1961, President Dwight D. Eisenhower announced the United States was formally terminating diplomatic and consular relations with Cuba.

In 1967, Jack Ruby, the man who shot and killed Lee Harvey Oswald — the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy — died in a Dallas hospital.

In 1977, Apple Computer was incorporated in Cupertino, California, by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Mike Markkula (MAHR'-kuh-luh) Jr.

In 1990, ousted Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega surrendered to U.S. forces, 10 days after taking refuge in the Vatican's diplomatic mission.

In 2002, a judge in Alabama ruled that former Ku Klux Klansman Bobby Frank Cherry was mentally competent to stand trial on murder charges in the 1963 Birmingham church bombing that killed four black girls. (Cherry was later convicted, and served a life sentence until his death in November 2004.)

In 2007, Gerald R. Ford was laid to rest on the grounds of his presidential museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan, during a ceremony watched by thousands of onlookers.

In 2008, Illinois Sen. Barack Obama won Democratic caucuses in Iowa, while Mike Huckabee won the Republican caucuses.

In 2013, students from Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, reconvened at a different building in the town of Monroe about three weeks after the massacre that had claimed the lives of 20 first-graders and six educators.

In 2018, President Donald Trump signed an executive order disbanding the controversial voter fraud commission he had set up to investigate the 2016 presidential election after alleging without evidence that voting fraud cost him the popular vote; the White House blamed the decision to end the panel on more than a dozen states that refused to cooperate.

In 2020, the United States killed Iran's top general in an airstrike at Baghdad's international airport; the Pentagon said Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's elite Quds force, had been "actively developing plans to attack American diplomats and service members" in Iraq and elsewhere. Iran warned of retaliation.

In 2022, a jury in San Jose, California, convicted Elizabeth Holmes of duping investors into believing that her startup company Theranos had developed a revolutionary medical device that could detect diseases and conditions from a few drops of blood.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Dabney Coleman is 92. Singer-songwriter-producer Van Dyke Parks is 81. Musician Stephen Stills is 79. Rock musician John Paul Jones (Led Zeppelin) is 78. Actor Victoria Principal is 74. Actor-director Mel Gibson is 68. Actor Shannon Sturges is 56. Actor John Ales is 55. Jazz musician James Carter is 55. Contemporary Christian singer Nichole Nordeman is 52. Musician Thomas Bangalter (Daft Punk) is 49. Actor Jason Marsden is 49. Actor Danica McKellar is 49. Actor Nicholas Gonzalez is 48. Singer Kimberley Locke (TV: "American Idol") is 46. Actor Kate Levering is 45. Former NFL quarterback Eli Manning is 43. Actor Nicole Beharie is 39. Pop musician Mark Pontius is 39. R&B singer Lloyd is 38. Pop-rock musician Nash Overstreet (Hot Chelle (shel) Rae) is 37. Actor Alex D. Linz is 35.

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.

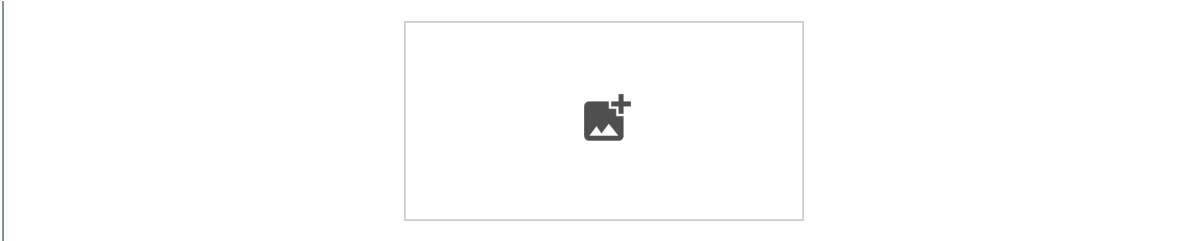
- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

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

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

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