

Sharp Talk

Editor
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Extension 6803

The Fact Finders

The News Research staff in the Newsroom's Information Technology Department may know more about Enron than the company's board of directors. Under deadline pressure, they can find an obscure fact from an event in 1967 or the 14th Century, and locate the phone numbers of valuable sources for a breaking news story. Each of them is a combination of librarian, detective, software specialist, historian, trainer, and journalist.

Researcher **MEG SMITH** describes her job and that of her colleagues as providing context for a reporter's story. "The reporters are the ones who are pounding the pave-

ment, they get the sources, and sniff out the stories. But then they need to know if this story has been reported before in our paper, or other papers. They need to know if this has ever happened before in history, or is there a precedent for what they are writing about that day. We provide information that didn't come from a source, the kinds of things that round out a story and give a reader a sense of the fuller picture."

News Research is open seven days a week, with staff working into the late hours of the night to handle



Researcher **RICHARD DREZEN** works out of the New York Bureau.

PHOTO - THE SOURCE

reporters on finding the information themselves with the multitude of resources now available online. The researchers also work on long-term projects to gather information that may be used as a resource for a future story, or as the basis for an investigative series.

According to Assistant Research Editor **BOB LYFORD**, the news re-

search staff works as a team to provide accurate, complete information to the Newsroom. "We take our reputation very seriously and we're proud of the service we provide."

"Having a News Research Department like this is what separates us from other newspapers," explained Information Technology Editor **DON PODESTA**. "Their work gives us a leg up on the competition." He adds that he prefers the Spanish translation of researcher, which is *investigacion*, or investigator, as being more reflective of the work done by this staff.

Every day, the researchers receive dozens of requests for information, which is tracked through a research request database. They also compare notes at a daily noon meeting to make sure that, especially during big ongoing news stories such as the Enron scandal, there is not dupli-



The News Research staff includes (l-r) **BOBBEYE PRATT**, **LUCY SHACKELFORD**, **LYNN DAVIS**, **CARMEN CHAPIN**, **MARGOT WILLIAMS**, **KIM KLEIN**, **MADONNA LEBLING**, **ROB THOMASON**, **KARL EVANZZ**, and **DON POHLMAN**.

research requests from reporters and editors. About half the staff are assigned to desks throughout the Newsroom, including Financial, Foreign, Investigative, Metro, and National. The other researchers cover the rest of the Newsroom and the bureaus. In addition to finding information, they also train

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Award Winners

On Wednesday, February 20, The Advertising Department announced the winners of the 2001 Performance Awards for advertising service representatives (ASR). The theme of the awards ceremony, 2002 – A Service Odyssey, provided a back drop of floating planets and galaxies, as the ASRs were honored for their “out of this world” performance last year.



The Outstanding ASR Awards were presented to **TRAN GIANG, KERRI CARPENTER, WANDA ELLIOTT,** and **JAMILLAH JONES.**



The award for highest customer satisfaction, based on monthly performance evaluations, was presented to (l-r) **ROD WILLIAMS, JEANETTE STRANGE, WANDA ELLIOTT, TOI LAWRENCE, NICOLE HARLEY** and (not pictured) **AUDREY WASHINGTON.**



JEFFREY LOPES and **LEIGH UPDIKE**, Ad Ops, each received the Partner of Service Award, in recognition of their support of the advertising service representatives.



The award for handling a high volume of calls in 2001 was presented to (l-r) **ROD WILLIAMS, PRISCILLA WEST, MARIA LOPEZ, TERRI CAMPBELL, ERIC SMITH** and **FRANK PETTY.**



The ASRs in the automotive service team received the award for highest level of customer service, including (l-r) **ROD WILLIAMS, MELISSA HANSEN, TIA BREGGS, JINAH BRYANT, LESLIE WADE** and **CIMBERLY NASH.**

JOHN GRAF, Revenue Systems, and **BARBARA HUDSON**, Accounts Payable, received the semiannual President's Exceptional Service Award on Wednesday, February 27. The award is presented to staff in The Post's administration departments, including Accounting, Administration, Human Resources and Operating Services, for commitment to providing outstanding service.

Graf has worked at The Post since 1977. He was nominated for the award for his efficiency and professionalism in doing his job, whether it is an initiative requiring a lot of his time, or a last-minute request before a Board of Directors meeting. Hudson, a Post employee since 1969, was cited for her ongoing commitment to customer service and for making sure that all invoices are absolutely correct before a check is issued for payment.



Publisher **BO JONES** and Vice President/ Controller **PEGGY SCHIFF** with the President's Exceptional Service Award Winners, (second from left) **BARBARA HUDSON**, Accounts Payable, and (second from right) **JOHN GRAF**, Revenue Systems.

cation of efforts.

“One of the great things about our job is the diversity of requests that we get,” said Research Editor **MARGOT WILLIAMS**. “Although there are researchers with expertise in certain areas, for the most part we are generalists who need to be able to handle anything thrown at us. We need to be able to find the answer or help the reporter find the answer themselves.”

The researchers rely on a number of resources for information. In addition to what is available on the Internet, there are commercial services, such as Nexus and Dow Jones, that the newspaper subscribes to that provide information online including public records or published articles. News Research also receives information from the local jurisdictions, and has developed rela-



MEG SMITH, BOB LYFORD and **BRIDGET ROEBER** round out the rest of the News Research team. **MARY LOU WHITE** and **ALICE CRITES** were not available for the photos.

tionships with public and academic libraries across the country. The researchers are constantly gathering information to create internal databases at The Post. Currently two of these databases include a comprehensive list of the detainees being held around the world in connection to the September 11 terrorist attacks, as well as a database of the victims of the terrorists activities including not only the victims of September 11, but also those killed in military action, or during the Anthrax scare.

The role of the news researcher at The Post has changed substantially in the last few years, as indicated by merging of the staff into the Newsroom’s Information Technology Department in 1999. In addition to staying up to date on the latest software to help them as researchers, the researchers also train the Newsroom staff on the new technology.

“Now that there’s been a convergence of technology and research, we also train Newsroom staff here and at the bu-

reaus on any kind of software, because the researchers are on the cutting edge,” said Bureau Resources Manager **BRIDGET ROEBER**. “We’re information specialists...we’re in a position to help lead the Newsroom with the changes in technology and help them to become more comfortable with the technology to do what they do.”

In the midst of the Enron scandal, the war in Afghanistan, the threat of more terrorist activities and preparations already underway for another election year, the researchers agree that last year and this year have been incredible years for news and busy ones for the staff.

“We really like the work we do,” notes **BOBBEYE PRATT**. “The work is fascinating and the people we get to work with are fascinating.”

Bylines



PHOTO - DAVID JONES

News; **CHARLEEN STEWART**, Advertising, and **DAVID JONES**, Public Relations, to talk to the students about the independent research projects they will be working on for The Post. Launched in 2000, the goal of the partnership is to cultivate and encourage profes-

sional talent from Howard’s Schools of Business and Communications.

CHARLEEN STEWART, Director of Strategic initiatives, (right) speaks to one of students participating in The Post’s partnership with Howard University.

On Wednesday, February 13, The Post held an orientation for 25 Howard University students participating in the newspaper’s 2002 partnership with the school. Held at the university, the orientation provided the opportunity for Post staff, including **SHIRLEY CARSWELL**,

Veteran Redskins football player Darrell Green provided inspirational advice to The Post’s Eastern 500 Club during a luncheon held at the newspaper on Wednesday, February 20. Green, who is also the founder of the Darrell Green Youth Life Foundation,

spoke to the group of close to 100 Eastern High School students whose grade average makes them eligible for the 500 Club. Also attending the luncheon were Post employees who volunteer as mentors

for the students, as well as Eastern High School administrators, parents, and representatives of organizations and companies who have partnerships with Eastern and other District public schools.



Publisher **BO JONES**; Redskins player, Darrell Green; Eastern High School student, Dominique Sanders, and AME/Sports, **GEORGE SOLOMON** at the Eastern 500 Club luncheon.

POST SCRIPTS

BLOOD DONORS NEEDED

The next Bloodmobile will be on Wednesday, March 20, 2002 in the 9th floor community room. Hours are 8:30 a.m. through 1:15 p.m. Donors can make an appointment with the Health Center at x47192. The Post has pledged 40 units and about 50 donors are needed to fulfill this goal.



BRACE WINS AWARD

ERIC BRACE, Weekend section columnist and a member of the local band, Last Train Home, received two awards at the 2001 Washington Area Music Awards (Wammies)

held in Falls Church on Sunday, February 24. Hosted by the Washington Area Music Association, the Wammies recognize significant achievements by area musicians. Brace received the award for best male vocalist in the Roots Rock/Traditional R&B category, and the award for most supportive of Washington music.

CREDIT UNION

The Commonwealth One Federal Credit Union Sales Center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every weekday. The credit union is located off the main lobby of the Northwest Building. Colby Butts can help you with any questions you have on your account, or help you open a new account. You can also call him directly at x4994.



Columnist Michael Franz provides insight into the challenge of pairing food and wine at the celebrity chef demonstration.

WINE FESTIVAL WEEKEND

The Post was the presenting sponsor of the Third Annual Washington, D.C. International Wine Festival held this past weekend, March 2 and 3 at the Ronald Reagan Building. Staff from the Food section, Marketing Department and Public Relations Department participated in the event with an attendance estimated at more than 5,500. The Post wine columnists, Michael Franz and Ben Gilberti each hosted a celebrity chef demonstration that paired wines with foods.



KIMBERLY GOODWYN, Accounting, displays one of the many gifts she received from her colleagues in customer accounting at her surprise baby shower on Friday, March 1. Goodwyn and Dionte Woods (pictured) are expecting their first child at the end of the month.

MARKETPLACE

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT PHONE EXTENSIONS: If you have a new Avaya phone, add a 4 before the internal Post extensions listed in ShopTalk.

HAVING A PARTY? Moon bounce rental available for birthdays and other celebrations. All day rental at low prices. Call Mike at (301) 430-0085.

FOR SALE: Large 5 piece, L shape sectional sofa. Dusty blue tweed. Good condition. \$150. Call Trish x7178 or (703)548-5982.

ISO HOUSE CLEANER? Has car and can work in Maryland, District or Virginia. Call Patricia Rodrigues (daughter of Cecilia Rodrigues of the cafeteria staff), at (301)408-1441 or (301)442-8712.

FOR SALE: HP 1115 Photosmart printer, used once, purchase price was \$200, yours for \$175. Call Joanna at x5933.

FREE: Schwinn230i exercise bike, excellent condition, seldom used, users manual, needs two strong people to carry it down from second floor. Also, cross stitch equipment, including a practically unused floor frame. All free, call Pat at (202) 332-5051 before 8:30 p.m.

PARKING: Paying too much for parking? Do you want to park indoors, day or night? Call Henry at x4335.

FOR SALE: Loveseat /sofabed - opens up to a twin bed. Ideal for some extra seating and sleeping for company, etc. Green/white stripe. Good condition. Covered and taking up space in my garage. Please come take away for \$125. Call Ellen at x7762.

FOR SALE: '96 Honda Accord EX, loaded, 5-speed, tinted windows, power everything, moonroof, CD-changer, antilock brakes, dual airbags, 4-door, 89K miles, well maintained, will sacrifice @ \$9,600, call (703) 280-9186 or x6661.

FOR SALE—Levenger solid maple child's bookcase, smooth edges, three angled shelved hold 150 books of varying sizes. 27"wx16"Dx39"H, like new, \$95. Call Sandy at x7391 or (703)765-9418 (eve).

FREE! FREE! Ads in marketplace are free to employees of The Washington Post. Join thousands of satisfied customers who have bought and sold through Marketplace. The deadline is Friday at noon for the next Thursday's issue of ShopTalk. Send your ad with your extension and home phone number via e-mail to ShopTalk, or fax to x4963.

BUYING A NEW CAR?: If you are planning on buying a new GM car (Chevrolet, Pontiac, Oldsmobile or Cadillac), I can save you \$1,000 off of the best deal that you can negotiate with the car dealership. If you are interested, call Joe x1994 or (540) 659-5122.

MARKETPLACE DEADLINE: Noon Fridays. Please include your name, extension and home phone number. **ADS ARE FOR POST EMPLOYEES ONLY.** Send ads to ShopTalk, 7th floor, or call x6803. To send ads via fax dial x4963; via e-mail send to **shoptalk**. Ads run two issues unless otherwise requested. One ad per employee, please.

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