

# Sharp Talk

Editor  
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Extension 4-6803

## A Passion For Food

**N**ext month will mark **TOM SIETSEMA**'s two-year tenure as The Post's food critic and restaurant reviewer. In addition to his Dining column, which appears every Sunday in the Magazine, he authors the Magazine's two dining guides, published in the spring and fall. He also writes the Weekly Dish column in the Food section and the monthly Postcard from Tom column in the Travel section, featuring mini-reviews of restaurants he has dined at around the world. Twice a week he's on the air on WTOP with

restaurant reviews.

Every Wednesday at 11 a.m., he receives about 300 to 400 questions an hour during his live online chat "Ask Tom" on [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com). The questions are a feeding frenzy on food, including requests for recommendations for a prom night restaurant, where to take the visiting (and cheap) in-laws, the finer points of napkin etiquette, an explanation of dim sum, and just last week, a question about how to pronounce his last name (SEET-suh-ma). Although he can only answer up to 40 of the questions during the time allotted for the chat, that doesn't deter the passionate foodies who will even implore via e-mail, "Pick me, pick me!"

"Tom had big shoes to fill—(former food critic) Phyllis Richman was a real institution in this town, and deservedly so. He's done a fantastic job," noted **GLENN FRANKEL**, the Magazine's managing editor. "He's managed the difficult art of being authoritative yet conversational, critical yet easygoing. Readers feel a sense of personal connection with Tom, and they look forward to his arrival week after week."

Richman, Sietsema's prede-

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cessor, is responsible for getting him started in his food career, which began in college. "When I was a student at Georgetown [University], I read The Post religiously and followed Phyllis Richman's columns. I would save up my tip money I made as a waiter at Pizzeria Uno and go to restaurants that she recommend-

ed. I was just in total awe of her." With the help of a journalism professor, Sietsema's first job after college was as a news aide to Richman in the Food section.

After two years, Sietsema decided it was time to leave his mentor and The Post. He moved on to writing about food and restaurants for the *Milwaukee Journal*, then the *San Francisco Chronicle*. After being admittedly spoiled by the restaurants and food trends in San Francisco, he moved up the West Coast to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. While he was in Seattle, a dinner and interview lasting eight hours landed him a job as a food critic for Microsoft's now defunct [sidewalk.com](http://sidewalk.com) site.

He found his way back to The Post when Food Editor **JEANNE McMANUS** asked him to fill in for



ART BY ERIC HANSON

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# Bylines

**B**ILL ELSEN, copy editor on Metro's tab desk, was recently presented with the Charles R. O'Malley Award for Excellence in Teaching from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA), a program of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University in New York.

The CSPA noted in its announcement of the award that Elsen has repeatedly demonstrated excellence in teaching, including lectures at CSPA spring conventions for the last 25 years, 18 years of teaching at the Institute for High School Students at Catholic University and two years teaching at the University of Maryland's School of Journalism. He also teaches at the University of North Carolina's summer journalism workshops for students.

Elsen has worked at The Post since 1970.

**V**ice President of Marketing **MARGARET CROMELIN** recently announced the first quarter marketing awards and the April Marketing Trooper awards. The first quarter Marketing Leadership Award was presented to **CINDY LEE**, marketing manager and **JEFFREY GIUFFRIDA** was named



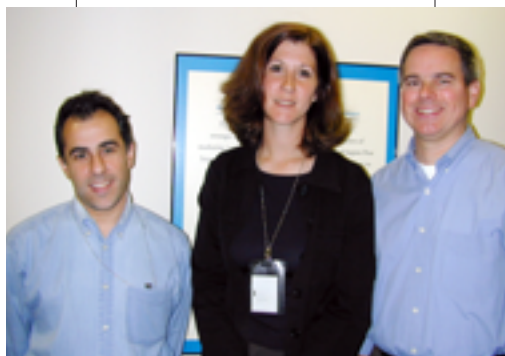
CINDY LEE



JEFFREY GIUFFRIDA

Marketer of the Quarter.

The Marketing Trooper Award for April was presented to **SEAN FINNELL**, **MICHAEL GREENBERG**, **JASON McKNIGHT** and **STACEY PASTOR**.



**MICHAEL GREENBERG**, **STACEY PASTOR** and **SEAN FINNELL** are Marketing Troopers. Not pictured is **JASON McKNIGHT**.

**S**everal Post employees were among a reported 4,500 participants in the Avon Breast Cancer 3-Day Walk, May 3-5. The almost 60-mile walk began in Baltimore, with participants walking approximately 20 miles each day to the finish line in the District. The Post participants included walkers **LUCINDA ANDERSON**, Advertising; **LISA KELLY**, Advertising, and **CARRIE MORSE**, Public Relations. **RITA O'CONNOR**, Circulation,



PHOTO - NEKEIDRA MASON

The Advertising Department's WalkAmerica team included (l-r) **ALICIA HAMILTON**, **SHIRLEVIA WATSON**, **LORI DEAN-NICHOLSON**, **DIANE HICKMAN**, **CANDIS CARNEGIE**, **BRENDA MARSHALL**, and **JACKIE WILLIAMS**. **ANN MARIE DITCHEY**, **JAMILLAH JONES**, **IVY GRAYSON**, **ANN TRAN**, and **CAROL WINN** are not pictured.

who walked in the event last year, was on the volunteer crew, driving an event truck and setting up tents.

On Sunday, May 5, a team of 13 Advertising Department staff participated in the March of Dimes WalkAmerica event in the District. The team headed by captain **JAMILLAH JONES**, Advertising, raised more than \$3,000 and earned the March of Dimes Bronze Chairman's Club award. The Post advertising team included **ANN MARIE DITCHEY**, **SHIRLEVIA WATSON**, **ROBIN WILKERSON**, **DIANE HICKMAN**,

**JACKIE WILLIAMS**, **LORI DEAN-NICHOLSON**, **ALICIA HAMILTON**, **BRENDA MARSHALL**, **CANDIS CARNEGIE**, **ANN TRAN**, **CAROL WINN**, and **IVY GRAYSON**.

**O**n Wednesday, May 1, **SUSAN O'LEARY**, vice president of Advertising, announced three winners of the Advertising Department's first quarter Publisher's Awards for service and cost containment. The winners were **WANDA ELLIOTT**, Major Accounts Unit, for service, and **JULIE GUNDERSON** and **DOUG DYKSTRA**, both from the Magazine, for cost containment.



Avon 3-Day participants **LISA KELLY**, **LUCINDA ANDERSON**, and **CARRIE MORSE**. **RITA O'CONNOR** is not pictured.

a staff writer in the Food section who was on leave. He was at the newspaper for six months when Richman announced her retirement and his coveted job as The Post's food critic was open.

"Phyllis leaving surprised me as much as anyone else," said Sietsema. "It was both a blessing and a curse to be in the building and being a contender for the job. No one else had been in the job for 24 years...rightly so they took their time looking for her replacement. I'll never forget the memo. It said that The Post was going to conduct a worldwide search and I thought 'Oh, great, there's going to be some great food critic in Madrid.' It was nerve-racking, but I'll never forget the day I got the job."

For each review he writes, Sietsema will visit a restaurant a minimum of three times and up to five or six times, depending on the depth of the menu. The multiple visits enable him

to be fair in his reviews.

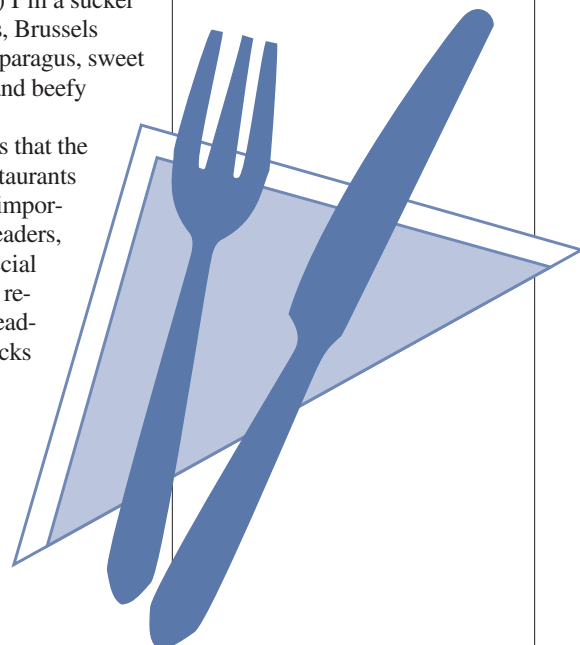
He admits that he often leaves a restaurant still hungry, since he only takes a few bites of a dish to determine its worth. Still, with an estimated 7,000 restaurants in the Washington Metro area, there is a lot of food to taste.

"I have the best job at The Post, but it's a very strange life," explained Sietsema. "The days are really long. I work from 9:30 in the morning and most nights I don't get home until 10:30 or 11 at night, and I eat out every day. There's the notion that I eat at great restaurants all the time, but the job is a lot less glamorous when I find myself on a Saturday night eating bad sushi in Manassas."

"The best part of the job is the dialogue with readers," he added. "I try to put myself in their place. I keep an image of my parents in mind and I ask myself, 'Would this be worth it to them?' I think about value for the money."

For the record, Sietsema noted his favorite foods during his online chat on May 1. The list includes a "good roast chicken, a nice crab cake, a memorable hamburger – and vegetables! (I eat far too much meat in this job.) I'm a sucker for roasted beets, Brussels sprouts, fresh asparagus, sweet corn, pumpkin and beefy tomatoes."

"Tom realizes that the reviewing of restaurants is an extremely important job to our readers, that he has a special bond with and a responsibility to readers. He never backs off on that mission," said McManus, who also added, "And he never seems to gain weight! What's the deal with that?"



## Matching Gifts Deadline

The next Matching Gifts deadline is Wednesday, May 29. Matching Gifts forms received after this quarterly deadline will be processed in the next quarter. The Matching Gifts program provides matching funds to donations that employees make to 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organizations. The program enables full-time employees to make donations/contributions up to \$2,000 matched and eligible part-time employees to have up to \$1,000 matched per calendar year. To encourage giving to educational institutions and employee volunteerism, The Post double matches donations to educational institutions and organizations where an employee is an

active volunteer. The program provided funding to 437 organizations in 2001, with contributions exceeding \$300,000. For more information about the Matching Gifts program's eligibility requirements and to obtain forms, contact the Public Relations Department at x4-6835. Matching Gifts forms are also available online on *IntraNED*. Look under TOOLS on the left-side of the home page and click on online forms.





## POST SCRIPTS

### WEBBY AWARD FINALIST

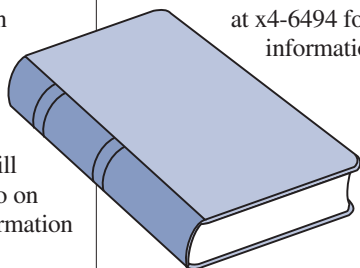
*Washingtonpost.com* has been named as a finalist in the Webby Awards — one of the most recognized Internet industry competitions.

The site was selected for its outstanding OnPolitics section. This recognition is testimony not only to the site's standing as an online news leader, but to its innovation and excellence in the Internet industry as a whole.

The Webby winners will be determined by a panel of judges, but *washingtonpost.com* can also win a "People's Voice" award, which is determined by a public vote.

According to the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences, which sponsors the awards, the Webbys "strive to combine the rich diversity of perspectives and talent of the online community in order to recognize the finest work by the most skilled people in this dynamic field."

The award ceremony will be held in San Francisco on June 18. For more information on the awards, visit [www.webbyawards.com](http://www.webbyawards.com).



**DANIEL UTHMAN**, sports editor for the Southern Maryland Extra, took this photo of the roof being repaired on the Southern Maryland Bureau's office in downtown La Plata. The bureau office was spared the substantial damage caused to many homes and businesses in La Plata and the surrounding area during the devastating tornado on Sunday, April 28.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

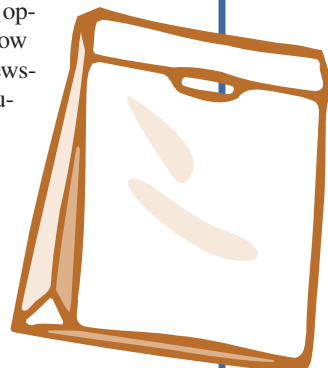
Volunteers are needed to help with registration for The Post's Book Club event on Saturday, May 18 between 1 p.m.- 4 p.m. (flexible) at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in the District. Volunteers will receive tickets to the event, which will feature best-selling suspense writers Sara Paretsky, Brad Meltzer, and John Lescroart.

Call Lola in Marketing at x4-6494 for more information.

### BROWN BAG WITH PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Public Relations Department will be hosting a brown bag lunch on Tuesday, May 21, noon to 1 p.m. in the ninth floor community room. Employees will have the opportunity to learn more about how the department promotes the newspaper to readers and the community through media relations, special events, the speakers bureau, and partnerships with area organizations and companies. There will also be a discussion of the department's internal communications function, including ShopTalk and *IntraNED*.

Refreshments will be provided and the first 50 attendees will receive door prizes. For more information, contact **LISA JACZKO** at x4-7970.



## MARKETPLACE

**IN SEARCH OF:** Staff writer returning to Post from book leave is ISO of home and nanny. House to rent or buy beginning June or July, 3BR+, prefer Georgetown, Cleveland Park, Kalorama, Chevy Chase neighborhoods. Also- full-time nanny, must be legal. Call Laura Blumenfeld at (212) 316-1123 or e-mail [Laurablu01@aol.com](mailto:Laurablu01@aol.com).

**FOR SALE:** Amana self-clean gas/propane oven, white, 3-yrs.-old, 1 year left on warranty. \$250, 1950s small kitchen hutch. white w/ glass doors. \$150, mahogany buffet \$300. Photos avail. of all. Call Paige at x4-4253.

**FOR SALE:** Our wonderful house in Center Sandwich, NH, perfect getaway, 3.2 acres, great view. Hiking, skiing. Share private beach on Bearcamp Pond, asking \$329,000. Call Richard L. Lyons (retired) (603) 284-7005.

**BAKE SALE:** Delicious cakes and cookies made by a mom-and-son team as part of fundraising efforts for seventh-grader's student ambassador trip to Australia in July. Chocolate chip, oatmeal raisin and peanut butter cookies: \$4/dozen; many kinds of cakes, including our semi-famous chocolate peppermint cake: \$15 and up. Available for pickup at The Post most any M/Tu/Th/F, May through June. Lots of satisfied Post customers already! Call Anne at x4-5426 or (703) 533-0420.

**FOR SALE:** Wide selection of beanie babies, in mint condition and the price is negotiable. Please call Pershon at (301) 460-3722 (home), or x4-5995.

**FOR SALE:** 1994 Oldsmobile Achieva, 85K miles, power windows/brakes, ac, auto. Looks great and runs even better. Call Andy Denault at x4-1254 or (202) 438-0934.

**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.

**FOR SALE:** Redskins season ticket. Section 406. Row 12. Seat 47. (12) games. (10) Regular and (2) Exhibition games. \$690. Call Nancy x4-7042 or 703-548-0804 (H).

**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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