

ShopTalk



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Editor, Mario I. Oña, x4-6803

Howard-Post Partnership Reveals: 'Government Needs to Step In'

Over 500 Howard University students gave up bathing suits, mist fans and white-sand beaches in aqua-blue paradise for worn-out jeans, hammers and murky purgatory during their recent spring break. In addition to the Alternative Spring Breakers who went to New Orleans to build houses, help with the clean-



Before the panel discussion, the panelists and moderator listen to students as they describe their experiences in New Orleans. (From front to back) Jeanne Ellinport, director of communications for the American Red Cross Hurricane Recovery project; moderator and Post columnist **Eugene Robinson**; Gregory Thomas, director of the school preparedness and planning program at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health; **Marcia Davis**, Style assignment editor; and Ty Axson, Howard student and co-chair of Alternative Spring Break.

PHOTO - COLLEEN ZELLMER



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Howard University students Faven Woldu (left) and Jessica Bailey working in the Lower Ninth Ward (New Orleans) with Habitat for Humanity as part of the school's Alternative Spring Break.

ing efforts and mentor elementary students, a group of student journalists went as part of the Howard-Post partnership project, "We are Katrina." They reported, photographed and documented the devastation that still lingers almost 18 months after.

On April 11, a few weeks after the trip, the "We are Katrina" forum and exposition was held at Howard's Armour J. Blackburn University Center. Through varying viewpoints, the forum made a case that New Orleans citizens were neglected by the government twice—before and after the hurricane. It also made an equally com-

elling case: in the absence of government, volunteerism is still very much in demand.

A slide show of carefully selected photos, preceding the forum, set the stage. Photos of an abandoned set of dentures in a dirty ashtray, rusty silverware, moldy ceilings and rubble-covered floors highlighted the still prevalent displacement of New Orleans residents.

Public Relation's **David Jones**, who helped organize the event, welcomed everyone and noted, "This is the 25-year anniversary of

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Movers and Shakers

Fairfax County recently recognized the Middleridge Women's Club on the organization's 30th anniversary. **Lucia Boger**, Springfield plant mailroom assistant superintendent and president of the community service organization, accepted a plaque. According to the Fairfax County website: "Throughout the years the club has supported the community by welcoming new residents, purchasing supplies for students, collecting stuffed animals and shoes to be sent overseas, and gathering books to



PHOTO - LISA CONNORS

Lucia Boger, Springfield plant mailroom assistant superintendent (holding plaque), accepts a plaque from Fairfax County on behalf of her organization, the Middleridge Women's Club.

restock libraries following Hurricane Katrina. In addition, the club has sponsored children for summer camps and contributed to the All Night graduation parties, Avon Breast Cancer Walk, the American Red Cross, Hospice of Northern Virginia and the Pentagon Memorial Fund."

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Wayne Berbig is a foreman at the Springfield plant who started at The Post in August 1981. Five years later, he started volunteering with Special Olympics Maryland—something he continues to do to this day. He began volunteering during the Summer Special Olympics in 1986, after his daughter said she wanted to do some community service. At first, he volunteered for the four annual main competitions in Maryland. In the past seven years, however, he has worked in several other Special Olympics competitions: sailing and kayaking (four-day event) in July, cycling (one-day event) and his "all-time best," the Maryland State Police Bear Plunge (three-day event).

Berbig dedicates his time to Special Olympics through the American Legion Volunteers and his duties include everything from setting up courses to ensuring there is plenty of water and cups for the participants. "If it needs to be set up, we do it," he says. "If they need help running the event, we do it. And when it's all done, we tear it down, pack it in the trucks and take everything back to the warehouse near BWI airport."

He volunteered during a basketball tournament in Towson, Md. on March 19, where he helped set up and also grilled hot dogs. Though it was a one-day event, he started working at 6:30 a.m. and returned home at 7:00 p.m. He's looking forward to helping out with the summer games also in Towson from June 7 through June 10.

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A week after machinist **Walter Maddox**, Production, received his Outstanding Service award during College Park's Pressroom awards, he was given College Park's Exceptional Employee award during the Maryland plant's third annual year in review. Maddox will be entitled to his own parking space for a year.



Machinist Walter Maddox, after receiving his Outstanding Service award

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Just in: The list of Post Pulitzer Prize finalists for 2007:

Gil Gaul, Dan Morgan and Sarah Cohen (Public Service)

Anthony Shadid (International Reporting)

Ruth March (Commentary)

Sebastian Mallaby (Editorial Writing)

Tom Ricks (General Non-Fiction)

Of note, the *Miami Herald's* Debbie Cenziper, who will join The Post's Metro staff in the summer as an investigative reporter, won the Pulitzer Prize for Local Reporting.

More details on the finalist entries in next week's ShopTalk. ■

this partnership and, appropriately, this is the biggest project to date.”

Several student journalists then briefly discussed their experiences. Broadcast journalism major Vanessa Mizell said, “It was a very emotional place and you had to really distance yourself to be able to do the job.” She then showed her video news report on St. Augustine—a Catholic school for boys—where 38 Howard students went expecting to teach algebra or English, and instead taught and were taught things “that had little to do with what could be found in a textbook,” as Mizell and another student, Courtney Bowe, wrote in a special report that was published in *The Post* on April 9 (B02).

Shirley Carswell, assistant managing editor of planning and reporting at *The Post*, then introduced the evening’s



Howard photojournalist Colleen Zellmer captures a symbolic moment: a torn, forgotten American flag hanging on an equally neglected house in New Orleans’ Lower Ninth Ward.

PHOTO — COLLEEN ZELLMER

paredness and planning program at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health; **Marcia Davis**, Style assignment editor, and Ty Axson, Howard student and co-chair of Alternative Spring Break.

Davis, who accompanied and mentored the journalism students and then helped place some of their stories

To get the student perspective on volunteerism in New Orleans, Robinson called on Axson. “I didn’t see too many African American volunteers,” Axson said. “People seemed so appreciative that we were there. People thanked us everywhere we went. Cars would even stop to thank us.”

After being prompted by Robinson to talk about the government’s response, Ellinport said, “The lack of government is why we’re in the situation that we’re in. The government really needs to step in.” She then said, “It’s truly embarrassing that we’re in this situation when we just paid our taxes.” The panelists agreed that the government failed and continues to fail—at all levels—the entire Gulf Coast region, not just New Orleans.

Robinson then shifted the focus towards the future and asked what else could be done and what, if any, lessons were learned. Thomas, who recently authored the book, “Freedom From Fear: A Guide to Safety, Preparedness, and the Threat of Terrorism,” cited a report by the University of South Carolina

that listed a “general distrust for the government” and “inconsistent evacuation reports” as the principal reasons as to why many people in New Orleans did not evacuate.

Thomas, Ellinport and Davis then offered simple things students can do to help out. Thomas suggested helping displaced Katrina survivors who have relocated to the D.C. area. Ellinport said many kids just need someone to talk to and becoming their pen pal is an easy way to help. Davis encouraged the student journalists to “continue telling the Katrina story.”

Following this forum, several organizations, including Special Olympics, American Red Cross and World Hope International, were present at the exposition to offer students other volunteering opportunities. Student Erinna McKissick also recited her moving poem, “We are Katrina,” during the exposition. It’s available on *Intraned*.

Robinson summed it up best by saying: “This is one of the great tragedies of our time, but it’s also one of our greatest challenges.” ■

Editor’s note: Several student articles, a photo gallery and the transcripts to an online discussion with three of the student journalists are available through *washingtonpost.com*, keywords: Mizell Katrina.



Howard journalist Jabari Smith talked about his “extremely personal” return to his native New Orleans. “It was too difficult to return last year,” he said. “This year, my family has moved back and is recovering.”

moderator, columnist **Eugene Robinson**. Robinson presented the panelists: Jeanne Ellinport, director of communications for the American Red Cross Hurricane Recovery project; Gregory Thomas, director of the school pre-

and photos in *The Post* and on *washingtonpost.com*, talked about the “Jack-O-Lantern effect.” She said that many of the houses still have no power, so at night the few houses with lights on look like the teeth of a Jack-O-Lantern.

PostScripts



Player David, Accounting, takes a photo with the PostPoints character.

PostPoints Employee Launch

On April 10, the PostPoints employee launch took place in the Northwest building auditorium. While enjoying ice cream, popcorn and PostPoints-shaped cookies, employees also viewed the two local TV spots currently



(Left to right): Human Resources' **Jeff Buchanan**, **Jennifer Taylor**, **Peter Joseph**, **B.J. Johnston** and **Jeff Banasiak** take a group shot with the PostPoints character.

running on major networks and took photos with the PostPoint character. Information was available about the program and various folks from Marketing and other departments were available to answer questions. Finally, to help kick-start a lucky employee's PostPoints accumulation, 10,000 points were raffled off. The winner: **Christopher Mackey**.

EAP Tip Sheet: Alcohol Awareness Month

Even in small quantities, alcohol can impair a person's ability to drive. It can also lead to interpersonal conflicts and long-term health problems. April is Alcohol Awareness

Month and as part of APS Healthcare's continuing effort to promote the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a tip sheet titled, "Alcohol Awareness," is now available. Remember: Your EAP is committed

to being "healthy together" and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at toll-free 1-800-765-0770.

ISO Post Book Authors

On May 3, ShopTalk is planning to run a list of books written by Post employees within the last year. If you've written a book that has not been mentioned in ShopTalk, send the complete title of your book, along with a jpg of the cover and a two-sentence blurb describing the book. Let us know when the book was published and where it can be bought. Send your information to shoptalk@washpost.com or onam@washpost.com.



New Aetna HealthCare Features

Aetna recently added two new features to the HealthCare Spending Account (HCSA) claim process to streamline administration and improve customer service. The first feature is the AutoDebit.

Under AutoDebit, employees enrolled in the Aetna HealthFund or Aetna HMO and contributing to the HCSA, will have their out-of-pocket cost for prescription drugs drawn directly from their HCSA account at the point of purchase. This new process will reduce the need for receipts and additional HCSA claims.

Additionally, effective March 15, 2007, Aetna began utilizing ELIZA Technology—an "intelligent" speech recognition program—to notify members that their HealthCare spending claims have been received.

Once a manually submitted HCSA claim has been received and imaged, an outbound call will be placed to the participant advising that they should expect reimbursement within 7-10 business days. Aetna hopes to improve customer service by keeping members up to date with their HCSA claims submissions on a real time basis.

If you have any questions regarding these new features you may contact the Aetna HCSA Unit at 1-877-810-9189 or the Benefits Department at x4-7171.

Marketplace

FOR SALE: Dining room table includes 3 chairs and bench—all cushioned in blue material. Wood is stained in dark tone. Table is 35 in. wide and 6 ft. long. Can email photos. Asking \$250. Contact Joe at x6-1994.

FOR SALE: 2000 Honda Accord EX, dark green, V6, leather interior, AM-FM/CD. Miles: 123,500. Original owner, well-maintained, very good condition. \$7,000 OBO. Contact Sandy at x4-7391.

FOR RENT: Woodbridge (Va.) townhouse: 3 BR, 2 full and 2 half baths, finished basement with fireplace, large deck, patio, fenced backyard, washer and dryer. Security deposit required. Available now! \$1,600 per month (includes cable). Contact Bernard at 703-307-1800

FOR SALE: Vacation week in Villas at The Boardwalk. This is a beautiful ocean-front resort in Virginia Beach. Check in Friday, Aug. 3 and check out on Aug. 10. One bedroom, two sofas, kitchen. Sleeps up to six people. Accommodations: indoor pool, jacuzzi, gym and restaurant. Asking \$750.00. Call and leave a message for Trinh x4-402 between: 7 p.m. – 11 p.m.

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