

ShopTalk



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Editor, Mario Iván Oña, x4-6803

Six!

The Post made history on Monday, Apr. 7 by earning six Pulitzer Prizes in one year for six very distinct stories ranging from wounded vets living in cockroach-infested, moldy, military medical facilities to an

Weymouth, Chairman **Bo Jones**, Post Co. Chairman **Don Graham** and folks from other departments throughout the building swarmed and hunkered around Executive Editor **Len Downie** in the newsroom, as he briefly introduced the six winning submissions and the single finalist.

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Making accountability fashionable again, the Walter Reed Medical Center series by **Anne Hull**, **Dana Priest** and photojournalist **Michel du Cille**, which exposed the inhumane living conditions experienced by wounded war veterans, took

the prize for public service. As a direct result of the public outcry stemming from the reporting, three top Army officials, including the secretary of the Army, were removed from their jobs, and



The bunch that made Post history by snagging up six Pulitzer Prizes in one year. From left: **Michael Shear**, **Mike Semel**, **Ian Shapira**, **Brigid Schulte**, **Bob McCartney**, **Michel du Cille**, **R.B. Brenner** (front), **Alec MacGillis**, **Anne Hull**, **Gene Weingarten**, **David Maraniss**, **Sari Horwitz** (front, red), **Steve Fainaru**, **Tom Jackman** (not visible), **Steven Pearlstein**, **Dana Priest** and **Barton Gellman**.

the federal government continues to overhaul the military's substandard medical facilities and treatment.

In announcing their award, Downie said, "Dana and Anne's stories and Michel's photographs moved the nation and produced results."

Priest wasted no time in thanking researcher **Julie Tate**, "whose name appears on four of these awards," and editor **David Maraniss** for his "incredible judgment." She also thanked her husband Bill Goodfellow and two children, Haley and Nick, for "offering me hugs when the tales of wounded, young soldiers got to me."

Hull then said, "Dana is the public speaker in the family, so I'll let her remarks stand." She finished by thanking Graham for "keeping the lights on as long as possible."

Poking fun at himself, du Cille made the sea of heads across the newsroom laugh when he said, "For this story, I was asked to sneak my cameras in a gym bag, which I never use...[peering down at his waistline] as you can tell."

Over half of the Metro Section and eleven of the bylined reporters—**Sari Horwitz**, **Tom Jackman**, **Tamara Jones**, **Adam Kilgore**, **Alec MacGillis**,



Executive Editor **Len Downie** holds the Pulitzer gold medal that *The Post* won in 2000. From left: Vice President at Large **Ben Bradlee**, Assistant Managing Editor **Tom Wilkinson**, Metro Assistant Managing Editor **Bob McCartney** and newly minted Pulitzer Prize-winning business columnist **Steven Pearlstein** (accompanied by his wife and daughter) watch closely. National reporter **Barton Gellman** (far right) also earned a Pulitzer for his in-depth reporting on Cheney.

acclaimed violinist nearly begging for attention while playing masterpieces to a mostly ambivalent rush-hour crowd at a metro stop.

Newsroom colleagues, Publisher **Katharine**

Maraniss, **Michael Ruane**, **Brigid Schulte**, **Ian Shapira**, **Michael Shear** and **Jose Antonio Vargas**—led by Metro Assistant Managing Editor **Bob McCartney** and editors **R.B. Brenner**, **Lynn Medford** and **Mike Semel** earned the local reporting-breaking news prize for The Post’s incessant coverage of the tragic shootings at Virginia Tech.

“In print and on the Web during the critical first three days of coverage, The Post provided anguished families, alumni and the entire Hokie nation a comprehensive narrative of what had happened and



Anne Hull earned the Pulitzer Prize for public service with Dana Priest and photographer Michel du Cille for their exposé on Walter Reed Medical Center’s dismal outpatient care for wounded veterans.

profile the gunman’s disturbing mental health and highlight the failures of the university’s and state’s mental health system in responding “effectively to his highly visible signs of mental illness,” Downie said.

Vargas was specifically mentioned by Downie for reaching out to a student on Facebook and getting one of the first eyewitness accounts of the tragedy.

McCartney, speaking on behalf of his team, said, “This award is rightly an occasion for joy and a sense of accomplishment. As we celebrate though, let’s also remember and honor the 32 lives lost.” He then added, “We will honor the Blacksburg dead by donating the \$10,000 prize money to a Virginia Tech

scholarship fund or other charity commemorating the victims. It was Mike Semel’s idea and every reporter agreed instantly.”

Before introducing the next awards, Managing Editor **Phil Bennett**

said, “I want to recognize a milestone that is not part of the official ceremony. As of today, The Washington Post has won 25 Pulitzer Prizes under Len Downie’s leadership. No single editor has presided over more Pulitzers in the history of American journalism.”

After a long applause, **Barton Gellman** and Jo Becker

‘Angler,’ described Cheney’s central role in shaping policy on torture, military tribunals, the economy, the environment and the selection of candidates for the Supreme Court. ‘Angler’ set history straight.” Gellman opened his



National reporter Barton Gellman and reporter Jo Becker (now at the New York Times) worked together on the extensive, in-depth series on the Cheney vice presidency, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting.

remarks by joking, “When Dick Cheney came to us secretly in the summer of 2000 and suggested this project, I admit, I was skeptical. ‘I have a proposition for you,’ he said. ‘Big exposé: sinister, powerful vice president... that sorta thing.’ He’d pretend to hate it, but would actually use it to crush his rivals.”



Like a proud father, Foreign Assistant Managing Editor David Hoffman takes a photo of Steve Fainaru, who earned a Pulitzer for his reporting on the Blackwater scandal in Iraq. Hoffman edited Fainaru’s work.

(now at the New York Times) were recognized by Bennett for their in-depth series on the Cheney presidency. As Downie described it in his opening remarks, the series revealed how “Vice President Dick Cheney has wielded extraordinary power behind the scenes in the Bush administration.”

Bennett said, “Barton and Jo’s four-part series,

Gellman then thanked Becker for being a “generous colleague” and “disturbingly productive,” and also Tate for her research and for “finding things we didn’t even know we wanted.” Gellman finally thanked Downie and Bennett, and then the Graham family. He quoted **Tom Ricks**, who had said, “Their [Grahams] stewardship of The Washington Post these many years has been an act of patriotism.”

Before moving to the next



Reporter Michael Ruane is congratulated for his part in covering the Virginia Tech tragedy.

the major themes of accountability that would dominate public debate,” said Downie. “The story was distinguished by depth and authority in reporting, clarity and eloquence in writing, precision editing and the impacting grace of visual journalism and presentation, plus around-the-clock collaboration with *washingtonpost.com*.”

The Post was the first to report on the decision to keep the school open following the shooting at a campus dorm. The Post was also the first to



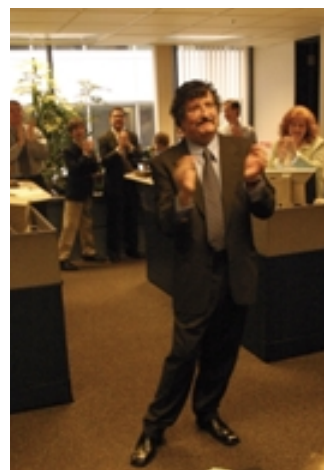
From left: Metro Associate Editor R.B. Brenner, Financial Assistant Managing Editor Sandra Sugawara and National Associate Editor David Maraniss during a Pulitzer Prize reception held on the ninth floor of the Northwest Building.

award, Bennett joked that anyone interested in getting Tate involved in their next project should talk to him and Downie first.

Bennett then introduced **Steve Fainaru**. "In the five years since the U.S. invasion, no Pulitzer has been awarded for reporting from Iraq about Americans at war until today." Fainaru had been previously honored as a finalist for his reporting in 2005 and then returned to Iraq the next year to report on private security

Fainaru also recognized not only the bravery of **Said Saif Aldin**, the Iraqi correspondent for The Post, killed last year in the line of work, but also the other Post Iraqi correspondents that risked their own lives to retrieve Aldin's body.

On a much lighter note, humor columnist and feature writer **Gene Weingarten** earned the feature writing Pulitzer Prize—pronounced "pull it, Sir," as he wrote during his chat the day after the official announcement. Weingarten's winning entry in Post Magazine, "Pearls Before Breakfast," was a social experiment in what happens when art is taken out of context. He had violin virtuoso



Humor columnist and feature writer **Gene Weingarten** asks for "the standing ovation [renown violinist Joshua Bell] never got." Weingarten's Pulitzer Prize-winning feature explored what happens when even the greatest art is presented in the wrong context: the L'Enfant Metro station during rush-hour traffic. Only a handful of people stopped to listen to Bell's masterful, free performance.



PHOTO - JONATHAN NEWTON

Newsdesk Assistant Managing Editor **Ed Thiede** (front) and Executive Editor **Len Downie** (right) with the Walter Reed exposé journalists **Dana Priest**, **Michel du Cille** and **Anne Hull** standing behind him, along with most of the newsroom and Post employees from all over the building await for the official word via the wire.

Joshua Bell play his \$3 million-dollar (plus) Stradivarius to over 1,000 passersby at the L'Enfant Metro Station. During Bell's 40-minute majestic set, only seven people stopped to pay attention.

Roy Harris Jr., author of "Pulitzer's Gold: Behind the Prize for Public Service Journalism," hosted a chat on Pulitzer history on *washingtonpost.com* the day after the announcement. When asked how rare it was for a humor columnist to win a feature story, Harris responded, "It is rare, indeed." He then said/wrote,

"What an amazing story. I could only think of the irony of such a beautiful piece of journalism being passed over by unappreciated readers, and perhaps ending on the bottom of the bird cage, while oh-so-few realized it for the gem that it is."

After Weingarten did NOT thank his wife (read further for explanation), whom he affectionately refers to as "The Rib" in his weekly chat, "Chatalogical Humor," he did thank Post Magazine editor **Tom** "the Butcher" **Shroder** and the people at "dotcom" for "helping

the story become global." Weingarten also acknowledged former Post classical music critic **Tim Page**, who "helped create the illusion that I know something about classical music."

Celebrity humor colum-

nist **Dave Barry**, who was hired by Weingarten at the Miami Herald in the '80s, wrote on his Web site: "One of the running jokes that developed between us is that at some point in the argument, usually early, I will remind Gene that I have won a Pulitzer Prize, and he has not. I



Publisher **Katharine Weymouth** congratulates business columnist **Steven Pearlstein** for his Pulitzer Prize in commentary. Pearlstein was recognized for his insightful and predictive analysis on the mortgage crisis more than a year, before it reached its current tipping point.

forces like Blackwater, who "roamed around Iraq with impunity—operating outside Iraqi law or U.S. regulations," Bennett said. Fainaru was able to infiltrate "this brotherhood of hired guns," Bennett concluded.

Fainaru explained that the decision to return to Baghdad for a second year was very difficult, particularly because of the toll it might take on his family. When he finally made up his mind and told Bennett that he would go, Bennett responded, "You're sick! You know, like the kids say, 'That's totally sick!'" After the laughing died down, Fainaru thanked his family and his son, who was in the audience, for "putting up with this sickness."



Vice President at Large **Ben Bradlee** congratulates reporter **Dana Priest**, while Priest's husband **Bill Goodfellow** stands behind them.

have used this particular argument—this is a conservative estimate—119 million times. And Gene has never had a good answer for it... Until today. I am very pleased to report that Mr. Gene Weingarten has won the 2008 Pulitzer for feature writing."

Business columnist **Steven Pearlstein** forecasted and warned homeowners of the mortgage crisis long before it reached its current tipping point. He predicted that subprime mortgages, among

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other dubious lending practices, would threaten the national economy. For being right and for writing it provocatively, Pearlstein was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for commentary.

Downie said, "Steve used his smart and sharply written column in the Business Section to chronicle and decry, well ahead of his peers, the prevalence of what he called—this is a scientific term—'loosey-goosey lending' and the risk it posed for the wider economy."

After Pearlstein joked that the night before, he got a fortune cookie that read, "Tough

doing in this club." He then said that he would like to share his award with his colleagues from the Business Section.

Finally, Downie took some time to recognize **Anne**



Columnist and features writer **Gene Weingarten** (center) embraces his editor, Post Magazine editor **Tom Shroder** and Shroder's daughter, Emily. Shroder edited and contributed to Weingarten's prize-winning feature.

Hornaday. She was a finalist in criticism for her "incisive and stylish movie reviews and essays."

Though there never seems to be a shortage of unsung heroes, this historic Post event was almost about editors like David Maraniss, researchers like Julie Tate, staffers and supportive family members, as it was about the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists, who sang their praises pretty loudly. Well, except for Weingarten, who delivered one of the afternoon's funniest moments when he said,

"I know it's customary to begin by thanking one's spouse. Now, I do have a great spouse, but the fact is she didn't have anything to do with this story. But then I got to thinking that if Hillary Clinton can take credit for 35 years of government service... well, then my wife WROTE this story. So, thank you, babe." ■



Walter Reed exposé photojournalist **Michel du Cille**, who admitted to sneaking in his cameras in a gym bag to take some of the disturbing photos of the living conditions of wounded war veterans at Walter Reed, acknowledges the help of news researcher **Julie Tate**. She was recognized for helping in four of the six awards.

luck, you're gonna come after Weingarten," he said that it was very humbling to be recognized in the category of commentary and join the ranks of columnists like **David Broder**, **George Will**, **Bill Raspberry** and **Colby King**, among others. "This is sort of a Woody Allen moment for me. I'm wondering what I'm

Become a Post Hunt Volunteer

WHAT: The Post Hunt is a huge mutant brainteaser—a kind of urban safari, where participants will be hunting for the answers to silly puzzles woven into the streetscape of Washington's eclectic neighborhood of Chinatown/Penn Quarter. The three, who are sorta the Socrates, Plato and Aristotle of humor journalism (Post columnist **Gene Weingarten** hired syndicated columnist Dave Barry, who Post Magazine Editor **Tom Shroder** then edited) came up with and refined the famous Tropic Hunt (now known as the Herald Hunt)—a city-wide contest started in Miami, where contestants solve puzzles that lead to more puzzles for the chance to score some sweet prizes. Now, they're bringing

their shenanigans to D.C.

WHEN: Sunday, May 18 from noon to 5:00 p.m.

WHERE: City Center Lot A (Old Convention Center site) Near Chinatown/Penn Quarter

WHAT (Part 2): Any Post employee interested in volunteering at this event and attending the volunteer after party can contact **Carla Taylor** at taylorcy@washpost.com or at x4-6494

YUMMY: Mark your calendars for The Post Hunt volunteer orientation pizza party on Thursday, Apr. 17 at noon in the Northwest Building auditorium. Shroder will give an overview of the Hunt and volunteer roles will be discussed.

Check out upcoming ShopTalk issues for more information and updates!

Marketplace

FOR RENT: Spacious bedroom in NE D.C. with a closed back porch. \$900 per month, plus utilities. Located inside a four-unit apartment building on second floor. Hardwood floors and lots of original charm! Walking distance to Gallaudet University and conveniently located near the New York Avenue-Florida Avenue-Gallaudet University Metro stop. On bus line (D3,4,6). Centrally located and close to Maryland, shopping and grocery store. Private backyard. Revitalized neighborhood. Credit check, security deposit and application fee required. HCVP (formerly Section 8) welcome to apply. Available for immediate occupancy. Please call Mrs. Johnson for more details and showing times at 301-793-8282.

FOR SALE: Check out the Nats at their new stadium versus the Atlanta Braves. Really good season holder tickets available for April 13, 29 and 30. Aisle seats, section 135L, row P, seats 1 and 2. \$90 for two tickets per game. Other games against anyone but the San Francisco Giants may be available. Contact Valerie at x6-2409 or 703-973-9194.

LOST DOG: Our dog "Storm" a white (with a little bit of beige and black nose) German Shepherd, age five, has been lost since Jan. 27. He's slender and sometimes his right ear is down. We've had several traces and sightings, but unfortunately all lead to nothing. We are grateful to everyone who has helped so far and we hope you continue to help us look for him. He is scared of people and won't come to you if you move toward him. It's best to call us if you see him. Please help us if you live in the neighborhoods between the Capital Beltway and Telegraph Road. Please contact Leslie at 703-965-2138 or 703-922-1774.

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