

# ShopTalk



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## Election Night and the Day After And the Day After

No night is more important at The Post than election night. No newspaper is more important on election night than The Post. And perhaps no election night was bigger than this past one. Bottom line: The Post had to get it

handled election night exactly as the public has come to expect from us: with seasoned assuredness, calm and authority," says Publisher **Katharine Weymouth**.

### COVERAGE

The Post reported the historic night with text, photos and video via the newspaper, *washingtonpost.com* and even mobile phones.

Executive Editor **Marcus Brauchli**, along with Managing Editor **Phil Bennett** and editors **Rajiv Chandrasekaran**, **Bill Hamilton**, **Ed Thiede** and **Michel du Cille**, made decisions about stories, photo placement

and headlines. Brauchli worked closely with *washingtonpost.com* Executive Editor **Jim Brady**

and editor **Liz Spayd**.

Former Executive Editor and current Vice President at Large **Len Downie** was invited back for his seventh presidential election as an editor. Downie, who had not voted in many years to avoid any conflict of interest and who had registered to vote this time around, put off voting once again, since he was an integral part of the reporting at the paper and Web site.

"Len was reprising his role as the person who calls the elections," explains Brauchli. "He drew on all available data sources, including our absolutely masterful poll czar **Jon Cohen** and reporters like **David Broder** and **Dan Balz**. We knew at 11 p.m. that Obama would be the winner. Len confirmed the math and we posted it."

Downie says, "I had data from the exit polls, our campaign polls, raw vote totals and the calls being made by



The historic A1 that ran the morning after the election with **Nikki Kahn's** photograph of the first family-to-be: the Obamas.

networks and the AP. It's part science and part art. I took advantage of my many years of election night experience, particularly the 2000 long count."

From Downie's vantage

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Executive Editor **Marcus Brauchli** and Publisher **Katharine Weymouth** sell papers to eager Washingtonians, who formed a line that went up 15th street and hooked left on M street. The photo ran with **Joel Achenbach's** *Achenblog* entry "Print Journalism Lives!!!"

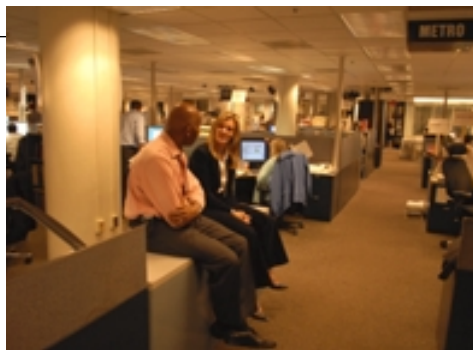
right. And with a new publisher and executive editor at the helm: no pressure, right?

"The Washington Post

point, the newsroom ran “unusually smoothly” for a presidential election night. But of course, there were some nail-biting moments. Calling Virginia and hitting the various deadlines for the four different editions (Regional, Suburban, Black Star and Final), for example.

“The hardest decision of the night for Metro was whether to call Virginia for Obama in time to make the deadline for the widely-distributed Suburban edition,” says Metro Assistant Managing Editor **Bob McCartney**. McCain was ahead in the initial returns, but predominantly Democratic precincts in Northern Virginia hadn’t been counted yet. McCartney talked it over with Metro editors **Mike Semel** and **R.B Brenner** and Downie.

“Len was cautious and reluctant to call it largely



Publisher Katharine Weymouth and Deputy Managing Editor **Milton Coleman** talk shop before results started coming in on election night.

exceeded the number of absentee ballots, Downie authorized Metro to call it in time for the special Black Star edition, also widely distributed.

Another close call was getting the photos from Post photographers **Linda Davidson**, **Carol Guzy**, **Nikki Kahn** and **Preston Keres**, deployed to Grant Park in Chicago. With Obama delivering his victory speech near midnight at Grant Park—the only photo op of the new president-elect and his family—the photos made it just

in time for the Suburban edition, which ran 30 minutes late for multiple reasons.

“We were on an incredibly tight deadline,” explains Deputy Photo Editor **Bonnie Jo Mount**. “Fortunately, we were able to quickly get images transmitted directly from the photojournalists’ cameras. Ah, modernity.”

Navigating through Grant Park was no cake walk. Kahn says the scene was amazing, but not surprising, considering Obama’s popularity. Kahn and Keres positioned themselves at different angles on the main risers, while Davidson was immediately in front of the stage and Guzy muscled her way through the crowds on the floor.

In the approximately 30-

minute span, Kahn took about 600 frames including the now ubiquitous A1 shot of the first family-to-be. “I was so focused on meeting my deadline that I really didn’t think about

the winning photo—I can’t stand missing deadline,” Kahn says. “We had an amazing group of photographers and any one of us could have had the front page image.”

Mount says, “Nikki had several similar images of Obama with his family, but we published the one with the best body language and facial expressions. We had a lot of options from a variety of perspectives, including Preston’s remote camera bird’s-eye view that we later published as a poster.”

National reporters **Bob Barnes** and **Mike Shear** were on the hook to write the A1 story.

“It was easier than the last two presidential elections, when The Post was not able to declare the winner,” says Barnes. With a 10:30 p.m. deadline for the first Regional edition, Barnes and Shear could not call the race for Obama, thus the headline: “Early Returns Show Obama on Path to Historic Victory.”

“The first story contained a lot of background about the race that we had written earlier in the day,” explains Barnes. “We did have enough results for the second [Suburban] edition to declare Obama the winner.” Shear was also able to quote from John McCain’s concession speech and sneak in a few Obama quotes from his victory

speech, while Barnes readied a more extensive beginning for the subsequent Black Star and Final editions.

Metro had anticipated the spontaneous celebrations that would ensue if Obama won. “We were in position to cover festive scenes at the White House and U Street,” says McCartney. “We had accounts of the festivities starting in the Suburban edition, with much more detail for later editions and the Web.”



A bundle of 20 Post election papers was fetching \$306.99 on eBay two days after the election.

## THE DAY AFTER

Though the historic election coverage had been put to bed around 3 a.m., the shift to The Post making a little bit of its own history was just beginning.

“By 7 a.m., we realized we needed to print more newspapers,” says Production Vice President **Jim Coley**. The Post had anticipated a higher demand and increased production by 30 percent, but the demand far exceeded expectation.

Weymouth says, “I don’t think anyone, including other newspapers around the country, had any way of foreseeing the massive sellouts throughout the day.”

By 8 a.m. lines started forming in front of The Post



One of four camera crews that were on deck at Springfield to capture the historic Post declaring Barack Obama president.

because there were a lot of absentee ballots still to come—especially in Southeast Virginia, which is heavily military and pro-McCain,” says McCartney. “However, when Obama’s margin reached about 70,000, [Downie] agreed to let us say Obama had ‘appeared’ to win the state—in time for the Suburban edition.” When Obama’s margin

with folks looking to buy extra copies of the historic paper. At one point, the line traveled up 15th Street and hooked a left on M Street. Prior to the election, The Post had decided to print a commemorative edition to be sold with the Jan. 20 inauguration issue, but reality quickly jettisoned that plan.

“As soon as we heard the newspaper had sold out, we mobilized a group of key decision-makers and moved forward with printing the commemorative edition,” says Weymouth.

The Post conservatively printed off 350,000 copies on Wednesday, Nov. 5 thinking they could retain 100,000 for the inauguration, according to Coley. But by 8 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 7, in an e-mail from Circulation Vice President **David Dadisman**, the total print order had reached an astonishing 1,050,000 copies! On eBay the bid for a bundle of 20 papers was at \$306.99. Washingtonpost.com tallied 17,485,197 page views on Nov. 5 alone, according to WPNI Communications Director **Kris Coratti**. And when the demand for the paper expanded to the rest of the country, The Post quickly found a way to sell the paper and some A1-emblazoned memorabilia online.

Among others, Weymouth credited the “heroes in Circulation”—**Mike Towle, Gregg Fernandes, Ron Ulrich, Jeff Johnson, Mike Dewey** and their teams of managers and independent distributors—for distributing massive orders from the plants to the retailers. She also acknowledged **Jeff Cox**, Administration, and the front counter Security staff for their crowd control efforts that helped sell around 50,000 copies at The Post.

Finance and HR Vice Presi-

dent **Peggy Schiff** pointed out that the Communications Center fielded an unprecedented 11,000 phone calls regarding the special edition and that Building Services moved “mountains of papers all over the building.” Apart from Security, she also acknowledged Accounting’s role in securing the cash and the Executive staff, News Admin and Printing Services for manning the makeshift sales counters.

Public Relations quickly coordinated responses to media inquiries and requests from four TV stations to videotape the paper hot off the presses.

At the plants, paper racks were set up in the lobby and replenished to keep up with the walk-in customers. Coley says that one lady drove from West Virginia to buy papers for her church. “Some were buying a 100 at a time!”

“I’ve never seen anything like it,” says Coley. “The closest thing I’ve seen to this was following September 11.”

Schiff says, “As it happens during all extraordinary events at The Post over the years, the true magic of the ‘daily miracle’ emerges. It is what makes this place great and it was a great day to be here. Print is NOT dead!” Reporter **Joel Achenbach** echoes Schiff’s sentiment in his Achenblog titled, “Print Journalism Lives!!!”

Weymouth concludes, “When I look at what we were able to do in so little time, I feel proud of the whole team and see this as a testament to how much readers still value the paper as a source for news, especially when history is being made. It is something they will keep to show their children and grandchildren for years to come.” ■

# Congratulations To the 20 Year Club’s Class of ‘88



Meet this year’s 20 Year Clubbers. Publisher **Katharine Weymouth** honored each inductee with a commemorative pin and thanked them for their work. She also recalled what life was like back in good ol’ 1988. Gas didn’t break a buck per gallon. Weymouth graduated from college. Oliver North was in deep trouble. Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan. After women were allowed to study at Magdalene College in Cambridge for the first time, male students responded by wearing black armbands and flying a black flag. And of course, the *Skins* won the big one big time, stampeding the Denver Broncos 42-10.

## Congratulations to the 20 Year Club Class of 1988

William Allis	Quinton Jones	Robert Sundstrom
Gary Scott Amos	Jeanne Koch	Mary Fleming
Randy Bell	Terry Lando	Svensson
Nora Boustany	Tom Lansworth	Floyd Swanson
Shirley Carswell	Mattie Lockhart	Michael Sweatt
Janet Chamblee	Timothy Mangum	Robert Thomson
Michel du Cille	Dan Martin	Nen Van Tran
Paul Farhi	Mark Maske	Thoai Tran
Russell Ferguson	John McArdle	Margaret
George Francis	Gordon Mehlman	Walker-Bruce
David Fuhs	Dave Ness	Willie Williams
Mark Gross	Steven Pearlstein	
Carol Guzy	Gayle Pegg	
Sandra Hayes	Stephen Poole	
Alan Holmes	Roxanne Roberts	
Andrew Hood	Howard Schneider	
Donald Lee	Michael Seeman	
Jackson	Mike Shepard	
Monique Johnson	Robert Smalls	
Rupert Jones	Elizabeth Smith	
Yvette Jones	Valerie Strauss	



Contact [onom@washpost.com](mailto:onom@washpost.com) to get link to all photos taken during the luncheon.

## Kornheiser-Wilbon Fundraiser



From left, Michael Ludgardo, former Post columnist Tony Kornheiser, Tiffany Shaw, Terrill Dongmo and Sports columnist Michael Wilbon during the sixth annual Kornheiser-Wilbon Celebrity Golf Classic. The tournament was held at Lansdowne Resort Golf Club in Virginia on Oct. 15. It featured 150 golfers and 35 celebrities, and it raised funds for the D.C. College Access Program (CAP). Ludgardo, Shaw and Dongmo are past D.C. CAP scholarship recipients. To date, the tournament has raised approximately \$1.25 million to help students in the D.C. area attend college.

## Printing Services

For all your printing needs look no further than The Post's own Printing Services. Open from Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., they offer the following services:

- Digital color/black and white printing and copying
- Finishing, folding, cutting and binding
- Laminating
- Shredding

You can easily upload any digital project and request your order at the Post Print on Demand (PPOD) site at: [freeflowwebserv.washpost.com/ws/](http://freeflowwebserv.washpost.com/ws/). Contact **Kunle Aboderin** at x4-5563 or at [aboderina@washpost.com](mailto:aboderina@washpost.com) with any questions.

## Calendars

The annual Post calendar will be available on Nov. 17 at the front counter of Printing Services for \$4 each. Packs of 25 calendars for \$100 are already on sale and can be ordered by emailing [printshop@washpost.com](mailto:printshop@washpost.com). Be

sure to include your name, department, extension, quantity and distribution code in your e-mail.

## Chalk Talk



About 200 Post subscribers and PostPoints members attended The Post and Bank of America Chalk Talk event at the Northwest Building Auditorium on Oct. 23. NFL Editor **Cindy Boren**, NFL writer **Les Carpenter**, Sports Editor **Emilio Garcia-Ruiz**, NFL writer **Mark Maske**, Redskins beat writer **Jason Reid**, and former Sports editor and longtime Sports columnist **George Solomon** signed autographs, took questions and discussed the attendees' favorite ball team: dahhhh...Skins.

## Note to All Post Employees

The Communications Department is requesting that Post employees and supervisors

contact **Mary Robinson** (x4-7880) or **Monica Williams** (x4-6000) and provide their contact information for the Communications department date base.

## Pancreatic Cancer Hits Close to Home

"This cancer came in like a thief in the night and took my mother," says **Christine Haynes**, Advertising. Within a month of being diagnosed, Haynes's mom succumbed to pancreatic cancer on Dec. 16, 1996. After coming to grips with the loss, Haynes decided to do something. She began supporting the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network by raising awareness and fundraising with the hope of eradicating this hard-to-detect, quick killer. November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness month. Contact Haynes at x4-4053 or at [haynesc@washpost.com](mailto:haynesc@washpost.com) to make a donation, to find out more information or to get involved.

## In the Green Corner

**FACT:** The Post installed automated light switches that automatically turn off lights in unused areas in its effort to reduce energy consumption

**GREEN TIP:** To reduce all the garbage from packaging, consider buying in bulk or buying products without packaging (source: **Jenny Mayo**, Sunday Source Eco Wise, Oct. 12, 2008).



## United Way

The annual Post United Way campaign is underway. Employees received an e-mail from IT with their username and password, which makes donating easier than ever! Contact your department representative with any questions. Contact **Vonda Coulbour**, HR, at x4-5435 to find out the name of your rep.

## Marketplace

**FOR SALE:** British racing green Mini Cooper, 5-speed manual, 26K miles, 36 mpg on highway. Perfect for zipping around town, parking in tight spaces and saving a bunch on gas. Zero mechanical issues. Recently checked up at Mini of Sterling. Also has cruise control, dual-pane panoramic sunroof, Harmon-Kardon sound system, 15-in. alloy wheels, all-season tires, black leatherette heated front seats with black interior, heated washer jets and heated mirrors. Asking \$19,000. Contact Dan Zak at x4-4244.

**FOR SALE:** Nordic Trak exercise machine for sale. Contact David Brown at x4-5049 or [browndm@washpost.com](mailto:browndm@washpost.com).

**NEW MARKETPLACE DEADLINE:** Close of business on Fridays. Please include your name, extension and phone number. Ads are for Post employees only. Send ads to ShopTalk, seventh floor, or call x4-6803. To send ads via fax dial x4-4963 or to email send to [shoptalk@washpost.com](mailto:shoptalk@washpost.com) or [onom@washpost.com](mailto:onom@washpost.com). Ads run for two issues unless otherwise requested. ShopTalk reserves the right to publish and edit all ads.