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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF E STREET

"The Advertising Department had so little space that my desk--actually it wasn't even a desk but a little work table--was almost right in the entrance. Everybody coming into the department had to go by me, so I was always getting bumped and poked in the head. But the building had its character; it had charm. Even that table, annoying as it was to work at, had its charm."

Retail Advertising's **ALAN OLSHINE** was speaking of his days at E Street, two buildings and over 28 years ago, when The Post was housed in a ramshackle gothic stone structure. Olshine and about 60 other present, retired and former Post employees exchanged memes, caught up on Post news and renewed acquaintances at a biannual luncheon held by the E-Streeters, a group whose common bond is their tenure on E Street.

SHIRLEY POVICH, a legend in the sports-

writers' world, addressed his colleagues with a humorous and nostalgic look back to E Street.

When The Post stood on E Street, about 500 people worked to produce an average 18-page daily paper which cost a nickel.

Although many E-Streeters speak warmly of the old newspaper days and of the excitement of living in busy Washington, some of their clearest and sometimes fondest memories are of the building itself.

"We had one elevator for the whole building," recalled **FRED MORTHORST**, who supervises the General Ledger operation in Accounting. "It was a screened-in cage, you could see all the wires and cables, and if the gate wasn't closed on the sixth floor, it meant walking wherever you were headed."

Hardly an E Street employee doesn't recall pounding the flights of stairs much more of-

ten than riding the elevator, but police reporter **AL LEWIS** related, "One time an employe happened to be waiting for the elevator with (publisher) **EUGENE MEYER**. The employe made a plea for a second elevator to him, suggesting that workers were wasting too much time waiting, and thus got less work done. To which Mr. Meyer replied, 'If only I could believe that was the only time wasted here.'"

When the solitary elevator wasn't taxing the employes' patience, the sweltering summers in the building were.

"We had no air conditioning," said **WILLIAM REITH**, who retired after 40 years as Credit manager. "It was hot as blazes."

To obtain any relief from the heat windows had to be opened, "But lots of windows were stuck and just wouldn't open," recalled the Newsroom's assistant managing editor/personnel, **ELSIE CARPER**. "When they

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Guest speaker **SHIRLEY POVICH** addressed the audience with a humorous look back to their days on E Street.



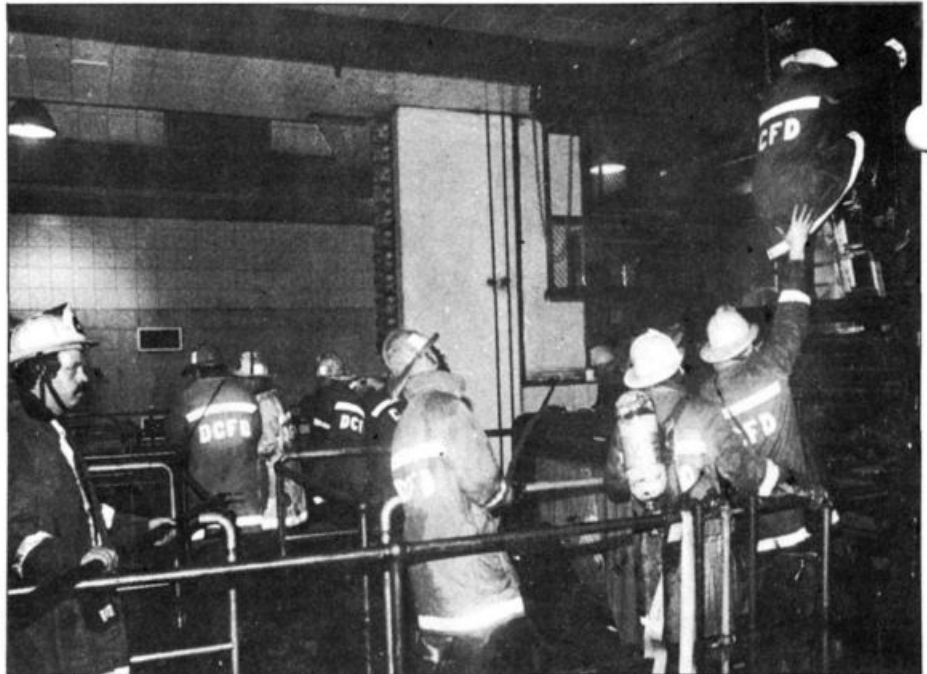
RAOUL BLUMBERG, (center), who retired as assistant to the publisher, enjoys Povich's speech.



Former managing editor **AL FRIENDLY** and retired editorial writer **ALAN BARTH** attended the E-Streeters luncheon, which was held at the National Press Building.

WPF_D + H₂O = TEAM WORK

Although the D. C. Fire Department responded to the alarm in just four minutes, Post employees already had the fire completely under control.



About once a week, press operators clean the black grime that collects on the Pressroom ceiling. Last Thursday, general workers **JONATHAN SINGLETON, JAMES GANT** and **DAVE PEEBLES** were in the "cage," suspended high above "E" press performing this routine task. Singleton smelled smoke. He wasn't sure where it was coming from, but he'd heard press operator **HOPE VESS** scream "fire" and he and Peebles immediately jumped the eight feet to the deck. Gant, however, didn't smell the smoke at first.

"I was still washing the ceiling," Gant recalled, "and when I turned around I saw the flames coming toward me. The fire was sweeping across the press."

On the floor below day foreman **ED ALEXANDER** yelled for Gant to jump. "I swung down," the pressman said, "and Alex grabbed me from the cage."

Sure that everyone was out of the blaze,



General workers **JONATHAN SINGLETON** and **JAMES GANT** were two of three in the "cage" when the fire broke out.

Alexander and others began to pull the burning paper from the presses, and watered it down to put the fire out.

Machinist **JOHN KIDWELL** heard the alarm when he was taking a break in the cafeteria, and quickly rushed to the smoke-filled first floor. He went immediately to the air duct, because he remembered a man being killed by fire when he was trapped in a duct. Kidwell grabbed a fire hose and climbed up the conveyor belt, which sends papers up to



While the fire was being contained, most employees waited it out in front of the building.

the Mailroom, to the ceiling. Knocking away the ceiling tile and kicking in the doors to the air duct, the machinist kept spraying water on the fire until it was contained.

The Building Engineers also responded immediately to the alarm. **HENRY NIXON, WAYNE HARNES, BOB BARCHERS, CSABA FOLDES** and **NICK PLOUSSIOS** assured minimum water damage by keeping the drain lines open, and helped contain the fire to the Pressroom with CO₂ and water.

While the Pressroom was contending with the fire in the duct, flames were shooting up a conveyor to the Mailroom. "At first the smoke was a dark grey," said Mailer **JOHN RUSSELL**. "Then all of a sudden it turned

black, real black. We (**PAUL ROBISON** and **WILLIE OWENS**) grabbed fire extinguishers and hoses and kept pouring CO₂ and water on it until the fire went out."

Right near the fire were 10 skids piled high with Sunday inserts. The three men pulled the heavy skids out of the way to prevent a possibly tremendous fire. Under normal conditions, even three men cannot easily move one skid.

The fire alarm sounded at 12:54, but by the time the firemen arrived, just four minutes later, the workers had the fire completely out.

"Everybody did a hell of a job," Alexander said. "Every mechanical department was involved—electricians, engineers, paperhandlers, Building Services, machinists, and of course the press operators and Pressroom general workers."

"They (the press workers) were taking everything they could get their hands on to put out the fire," Kidwell said.

After sandwiches and soda (on the house) the workers set about cleaning the Pressroom, which was damaged only slightly by water. Only a few rolls of paper were damaged and in the Mailroom, just two newspapers were lost. "I think that's some kind of record," laughed the Mailroom's Robison. "The only two papers we couldn't salvage were the two that were stuck in the conveyor belt when the fire broke out."

The crews, about 100 Pressroom employees in all, and numerous Building Service employees worked until 6 p.m. to get the area back in order, and between six and nine that night, the priority was getting the paper out on time.

The electricians assured that no damage had been done in the electrical areas, Alexander said, and by 9:00, E press was back in operation.

"Even right after the fire, eight of nine presses were working," said Alexander, "and by nine all the presses were operating."

"The first edition was out right on time."

(E - STREETERS, continued from page 1)

did, then the bugs would fly in." Carper, whose first job at The Post was as a library file clerk, remembered, "the Engraving Department was right above the library. They etched plates with acid then, and this acid leaked through the floor onto the filing cabinets. And you'd know whenever the presses started running because you could feel the whole building shake."

Although the building was about to collapse under their feet, E Street was, after all, home.

"E Street was an inadequate, decrepit building," Carper said, "that everybody seemed to enjoy."

"It was a pretty sorry place," added NEAL GREENWALD, who came to The Post as a printer's apprentice in 1918 and retired as the night production manager in 1972, "but we managed. It was a daily struggle on E Street. We worked for next to nothing, but I bet you boys and girls don't have as much fun as we did."

To Olshine, the building "had the flavor of the old newspaper days—the smell, the dust."

The old newspaper days—Speedgraphic cameras that old timers clung to because they never thought the newer 35-mm would amount to much....copy boys continuously running for coffee and sandwiches and whiskey....reporters concentrating mostly on Washington news because the streetcar only went to the District line.... classified ads being taken by hand.

MARJORIE DE LOZIER, assistant Classified manager for 10 years in the 1940s, recalled that the phone room, which now employs about 150 persons, had 25-30 girls working in it then. "We didn't have typewriters so the ads were often hard to decipher because they were handwritten. When we got machines after the war, a lot of women couldn't type."

The first manual typewriters used in Classified have long since been replaced by electric typewriters and then by Selectrics, but certain things never change. "There was such a mixture of people in Classified," De Lozier laughed. "We had so much fun, the people were always so friendly."

Marjorie De Lozier met her husband of 29 years, George, when he was the manager of Real Estate Advertising. GEORGE DE LOZIER ran into a long-time friendly foe at the luncheon, William Reith. "As the credit man-

ager," Reith said, "it was my job to decide if an ad should run if the advertiser hadn't paid his bill. I used to have a lot of friendly battles with George. Naturally he'd always want the ad to run because it meant more advertising on his pages. But I had to decide if the ad should run, be cut out, or approve a credit. He didn't always like my decision."

Retired photographer ARTHUR ELLIS was one of the three members of the photo staff in the 1930s. "You had to use your head and your eye more and you had to guess the distance. The camera didn't tell you much. Then, a piece of film had to count. We used to take one or two shots; now photographers rip off a whole roll for one picture."

Povich commented on the differences in hiring practices. "If they needed a body, you were hired. You didn't need references, you didn't go through ten interviews—there was no such thing as a Personnel Department. I remember when JEAN HAILEY was the first girl copy boy."

"And now some copy boys are earning \$200 a week," he continued. "Most journeyman reporters make \$450 a week. I remember going down to the cashier's cage every week, turning in my blue slip to get the \$15 I earned as a cub reporter. And as sports editor I made \$60 a week."

"But I don't think everybody's having as much fun now. I'm grateful for the good old days."

When The Post was the third paper in town and the Star was first, there used to be a slogan, Carper said, that "one Post reporter was worth three Star reporters. There was a lot of spirit, and a tremendous feeling of working together because everyone was convinced that The Post had a great future."

Olshine commented, "When I first came here in 1950 my boss told me, 'We're going to move. And you'll move with us.'"



Police reporter AL LEWIS and retired photographer ARTHUR ELLIS exchange addresses.

THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER ASKS "PARDON ME, BUT..."

"What team would you like to see go to the Superbowl?"



CAROL VAN HORN—News Dictation
"The Redskins, if they can find their offense. Failing that, anybody but the Cowboys."



BERT MEEKS—Advertising Accounting
"I would like to see the Seattle Seahawks and the Atlanta Falcons go to the Superbowl. I'm tired of the old teams. But I think it'll be Dallas and the New England Patriots who'll end up going."



VAN HARVEY—Customer Relations
"I'd like to see the Redskins go, but I know they won't make it. I guess I'd want the Miami Dolphins and the Minnesota Vikings to be in it."



WILLIAM MEADOWS—Advertising Art
"I think the Steelers and Dallas are going to go to the Superbowl. Naturally I want the Redskins to go but that's hopeless."



RONNIE PRUE—Composing Room
"I'd like to see Seattle and Minnesota. That would be a great game because it'd be youth versus age."



JERRE LOWE—Engraving
"Dallas and Houston. With both teams being from Texas, I think it would be a great rivalry."

Do you have a question you'd like the inquiring photographer to ask? Jot it down and send it to Camille Recchia, sixth floor.

POST SCRIPTS

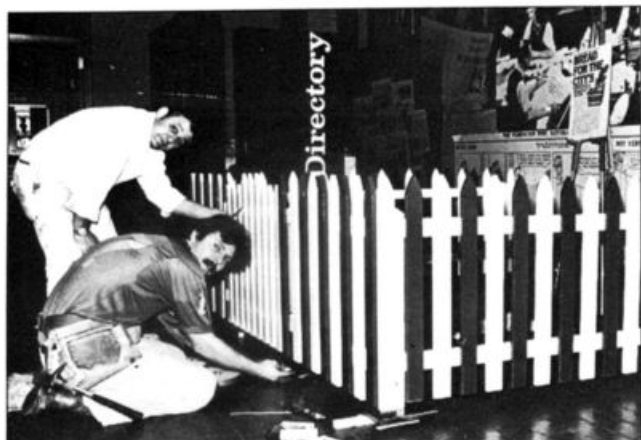


Photo by Tom Allen

MENDING FENCES—Building and painting this picket fence was yet another unusual task the carpenters and painters have performed in the building. They built the fence to enclose an area for donations made by Post employees to Bread for the City, a group of five neighborhood churches who distributes clothes and food to those who need them.

CIRCUS AMERICA —Hurry, hurry, hurry to the merriest Christmas treat of all—Circus America—have a great time, and help others while you're at it. The Washington Post and Giant Food are sponsoring two performances of this circus at Capital Centre. All tickets are half price for the 6 p.m. show on December 25 and for the Tuesday matinee on December 26 at 1 p.m. When you take advantage of this special offer, you'll be making life happier for others. The Post's net proceeds from these two shows will go to The Washington Post Charitable Trust for distribution to Washington area charitable organizations. Tickets are available from **GERRI PANCOAST** in Employee Services.



WHAT ON EARTH (or Mars) do these guys have on their heads? And why? The best answers, which don't necessarily have to be anywhere near the truth, will be published in a future Shop Talk.



HAPPY BIRTHDAYS — National secretary **CONNIE GRAY** was honored not with one but three birthday cakes on December 7. In the morning the Newsroom telephone operators gave her a cake; a few minutes later the Newsroom secretaries surprised her with their cake and then the copy aides presented her with another.



O CHRISTMAS TREE — The carpenters and painters couldn't have chosen a better person to present their hand-made Christmas tree to than Accounting's **NORMA JENKINS**—Jenkins handles the general payroll. The tree, constructed from wood slats, was decorated with metal odds and ends lying around the carpentry shop, including a lock key as the star.

RECREATION ASSOCIATION NEWS

THREE SHOPPING DAYS TILL CHRISTMAS —Stuck on what to get good old Uncle Fred for Christmas? No doubt you'll find something at The Recreation Association's last sale before the holidays. Post sweatshirts, t-shirts, tote bags and books will be on sale Friday, December 22, from 1:30 to 2:30. The sale will be held in the seventh floor stockroom across from the coffee lounge, just past Personnel.

MARKETPLACE

MOVERS — Will pay reasonable price for 2-3 persons with a truck to move furniture and some boxes from Arlington to N.W. Washington, this Saturday or Sunday. Call x6803 or 979-7128 after 6:30 p.m.

CALCULATORS — Two new pocket calculators for sale. Call x7737

DOBERMAN PUPS — Male, female, black & tan, and rust. AKC champion line. Will be ready for Christmas. Call Mike in the Virginia Office at x6115.

FOR SALE —Maverick mini-bike. Dixie drums (five). No reasonable offer refused. Call Jeanine at x7798.

PRINTING — Business cards, letterheads, envelopes, brochures, announcements and invitations of all kinds printed at a discount to all Post employees. Call Erwin Sessler at 262-9430.

FRANKLIN MINT BOOKS — Full leather bindings, gilt edges, satin end papers. All in new condition, make fine Christmas presents. \$27.50 each. Call Mike at x7861 after 6 p.m.

RIDE NEEDED — To New York City, on Friday, December 22. Call Laura at x6902.

STEINS — Ceramic steins and metal plaques imprinted with the Bullets' championship headlines are now available. Order now for Christmas! Call Tom Escalante at x7798.

What would you like to read about in Shop Talk? Your suggestions and ideas are always welcome. Editor Camille Recchia x6803.