

ShopTalk

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Herblock—A Love Story



Editorial cartoonist **HERBERT BLOCK**. For 50 years, his cartoons have appeared on The Post's editorial page. So numerous are his awards, they are arranged by decade on his bio and include three Pulitzer Prizes and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Block is the author of 12 books and is the only living cartoonist whose work is in The National Gallery of Art.

On January 3, 1946, The Post published **HERBERT BLOCK**'s first editorial cartoon. Fifty years later, that first cartoon, which was republished on January 3, 1996, is still fresh, insightful and undimmed by the passage of time. The same can be said for Herblock. "There's a timeless quality to what he does,"

said Executive Editor **LEN DOWNIE**. "He is like a classical music composer—there's as much complexity. His work stands the test of time."

The Post is celebrating its first 50 years with Herblock and they are years filled with affection from every colleague. Editorial Page Editor **MEG GREENFIELD** said, "Herb is an absolute joy to work with. Every day he comes in right on deadline with what is arguably the best political cartoon being produced in the country that day. In addition to that, he is the most pleasant, even-tempered and lovable of people in the building. I don't mean to cast aspersions on the other lovable people throughout the building—but I don't know who they are!"

Perhaps the subjects of Herblock's cartoons don't share Greenfield's love of Herblock, but they surely know of his artistry. "Herb is the greatest editorial cartoonist ever," said **DONALD GRAHAM**, The Post's Publisher and Company CEO. "There is nothing comparable, ever, to his 50 year record of commentary on politics and on Washington in the history of any country. There are many

well-known people in this building but only one of whom you can say with assurance people will be looking at his work 100 years from now, and that is Herb."

The Dec. 31 Outlook section contained a retrospective of his first 50 years' work and tributes written by Chairman of The Washington Post Co. Executive Committee **KATHARINE GRAHAM** and other colleagues.

Employees and visitors to The Post's 15th Street building are being greeted by a 20-ft. Herblock photo posted in a front window. Even a cursory reader of The Post would have noticed the full page photo of Herblock in the Jan. 2 issue. Photos of Herblock decorated with blue balloons and coupons for 50 cents off any employee cafeteria purchase were part of the celebration, too. The Post's cafeteria is a fitting place to celebrate Herblock. Lunch for him more often than not is a dish from the cafeteria—favorites are chicken a la king and spaghetti with turkey bolognese sauce—eaten at his desk. The menu for January 2 included both dishes.

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The Blizzard of '96



An unplowed 15th Street poses a serious obstacle to Robinson Terminal trucks hauling newsprint. Several were temporarily stuck in snowdrifts adjacent to the Northwest Plant's alley.

The Blizzard of '96 may be over but not soon forgotten. Employees still forced to climb mountains of snow—or to ford rivers of slush—on their way to work may not consider the blizzard to be over at all. But for the Production, Circulation and News departments, the worst surely must be over because the worst was very, very, very bad.

Accurate advance weather forecasting allowed time for emergency planning and key personnel were at the ready when the "storm of the century" hit.

"With the advance weather forecast, we sort of huddled and decided who was going to do what," said Vice President/Production **MIKE**

CLURMAN. On Saturday night, Northwest Plant Manager **BOB McLANE** came in ahead of the storm, "since," Clurman said, "he drives a car that goes nowhere in the snow." Both the Springfield and Southeast Plants under **JIM COLEY** and **ED ALEXANDER**, respectively, dug out with good teamwork from plant personnel.

Much of the smooth Pro-

duction operation was due to advance planning but, Clurman noted, "I think what we are really talking about is there are an incredible number of people who took their own initiative. We had people who were on vacation who called in to see who they could pick up and bring with them on their way in. I know one press operator, **JIMMY PARROTT**, who literally walked 10 miles to get to work on Monday night." Press operators from Northwest and Southeast pitched in, too: "**KEITH JONES** was all over the place picking people up," Clurman said, "and so was **J.J. McGOVERN**."

Herculean efforts to clear the paths for distributor trucks at the three plants meant the newspapers could be picked up. **MACK EDWARDS** and his Building Services staff at Northwest worked through the blizzard, keeping the sidewalks and alleys passable and, once the snow stopped, completely clear. Getting into unplowed neighborhoods was entirely another matter. The one-two punch of deep snow and unplowed streets made an arduous newspaper delivery opera-

tion even more so. "On Monday," said D.C. Single Copy Division Manager **ANDY DENAULT**, "about a dozen Circulation zone managers went with **LOU FABIAN** [D.C. Home Delivery Division Manager] to deliver papers. It took all of us three-and-a-half hours to deliver 120 papers." When reached last Thursday, Fabian was weary and discouraged, having worked on approximately three hours of sleep per night since the blizzard began. The lack of snow removal

had, he said, "hampered the efforts of a lot of good people trying to get the paper out." Staffers in the Circulation Service and Dispatch centers, some of whom did not go home for four days, handled the understandably large volume of calls about delivery while distributors, zone managers and every available friend, family member or four-wheel drive owner they could round up struggled against the elements to get papers to subscribers.

The emergency plan devised by Northwest Security had signed up more than enough volunteers with four-wheel-drive vehicles to ferry departmental key personnel to The Post. Systems & Engineering, Centrex, Cafeteria and other key people packed their bags and slogged in to work. Security's

IVOR WILLIAMS and **CLAUD BURNS** were among those calling The Post home for a few days, as they directed volunteer drivers to pick up key employees.

News needed dedicated vehicles for the reporters and photographers writing snow stories. Trying to lease four-wheel drive vehicles anywhere nearby was an impossibility. So, late last week, Metro's **LISA HEIDEMAN**, following an editor's tip, located a dealership near Kitty Hawk, N.C., willing to lease the prized vehicles. Heideman, Photo's **DAN MURANO** and News Personnel's **MOLLI YOOD**, piled in a car and drove to North Carolina, leased the vehicles and conveyed back to The Post.

Since then, Federal assistance in removing the in-town snow and state and local efforts in Maryland and Virginia have improved mobility around the area and non-delivery complaints have dropped dramatically. After a sunny weekend and with the prospect of above-freezing temperatures for the immediate future, the Blizzard of '96 may soon turn into a distant bad dream.

"People in every department came through for The Post during this tough week," said **BO JONES**, President and General Manager, "and we're very grateful to them."



JUDITH PETERS (left) and **DEREK NUNN** of the Circulation Service Center were still smiling after spending four days at The Post working through the blizzard.

For longtime readers, Herblock's cartoons are the subject they depict. Downie said, "A number of the images in Outlook on Sunday [Dec. 31] were very familiar; his anthropomorphization of the nuclear bomb, for example. That may be everybody's mental image." For many readers who remember the Watergate years, or the years of Nixon's service as vice president, Herblock's depiction of the former president is the quintessential image. While reading the Outlook retrospective of Herblock's work, Downie said, "Another thing that struck me was his 'Nixon' is not the only president whose image I remember as drawn by Herblock. His 'Eisenhower' and 'Truman' are the way I mentally look at these people. His physical characterization is the way I remember them and I imagine that is true for many of our readers."

Although it's said no man is a hero to his valet, Herblock's valet, if he had one, would undoubtedly be the exception to that rule. He's certainly a hero to his assistant of

31 years, Jean Rickard. "I came to work for Mr. Block in 1957. I was in my junior year of college at GW and answered an ad in The Post, 'Girl Friday to work for newspaperman.'" With the exception of maternity leave, Rickard has been with Herblock ever since. "It's been truly wonderful," she said. "He is the most warm, loving, decent human being I have ever known in my life. It is a thrill to have worked for him all these years."

Four times a week, Herblock fans are treated to his insight on current events. Vice President at Large **BEN BRADLEE** said, "In a reporter's time at The Post, one of the most important rites of passage is when Herb will show you one of his sketches. He does five or six every day. He'll show up in the City Room generally in the middle of the day and if he is working on one of your [a reporter's] stories, he will ask if you like it, if you think the wording is right. That is a blessing from above for a reporter—that this great man asks you for your opinion." Bradlee continued, "He is so unlike people's idea

of him, the vision they would conjure up of this 'slashing' type. He is so sweet—just a genuinely sweet person, and has always been. I have known him for 40-some years and back in the '40's he was fantastic. He has done so much for this newspaper and for this world. He's made them both so much better."

When editorial board member **BOB ASHER** was a child growing up in Washington, D.C., he had a current events bulletin board in his room. "I was sort of weird, I guess, but I would cut articles out of the newspaper and put stuff up on the bulletin board. I remember when it was announced that Herb was coming to The Post. I posted that on the bulletin board." Asher joined The Post in 1959, "as a lowly copy aide," he said. Asher is now an office "neighbor" of Herblock but enjoyed a close prior association with him when Asher's wife, Jane, became one of Herblock's assistants. "I filled in for Jean when she went on maternity leave," she said.

"I

worked full time from 1960-66 and part-time for a total of 20 years. He is such a gentle person and a joy to work for. It's hard to articulate it but he is a very sweet man; not like a regular employer. He is so much more than just someone you work for."

Downie said, "Seeing him moving around the Newsroom at 5 or 6 o'clock soliciting reactions for the ideas that he has sketched for the next day—he's a warm, reassuring presence in the Newsroom that I look forward to seeing every day."



Herblock's anthropomorphic atomic bomb, depicted in a May 31, 1981 cartoon.

Byelines

KRIS JIRGL has accepted a position as director of the retail sales network for Newsweek, based in Washington, D.C. Jirgl joined The Post in 1978 as an agent in the Advertising Special Sales category and became category manager for Special Sales in 1989.

GERA CHRISTIAN, confidential secretary to the Vice President/Systems & Engineering has left The Post to pursue a career in real estate and a graduate degree in business. Christian joined The Post in 1989 as a confidential secretary in what was

then Data Processing and continued in that position.

LARRY MARZ, maintenance coordinator for Tech Services in Systems & Engineering, has retired. Marz joined The Post in 1973 in the Composing Room, where he worked as a machinist. In 1982, he moved to Tech Services. Marz is retiring to open a Motorola mailorder franchise specializing in portable radios for police, fire and security systems.

JOHN "ROBBIE" ROBISON, career press operator in the Northwest Pressroom, retired last week after 38 years at The Post. Robison joined The Post in 1958 as a press operator trainee and has been in the North-

west Pressroom since then, working the night shift since 1969.

DAN BUTCHER has joined the Gazette Newspapers, a subsidiary of The Washington Post Co., as Controller. Butcher joined The Post in 1986 as a budget analyst in Accounting. He became Budget Manager in 1987 and Financial Accounting Manager in 1988. He moved to Personnel as Compensation Manager in 1992 and in 1993 was named Benefits Manager.

VERONICA MCGARRY has joined APCO Associates, a public relations firm affiliated with Gray Advertising. McGarry joined The Post in 1988 as a sales

aide in Magazine Advertising. She moved to Classified as a telephone sales representative in Real Estate in 1989 and in 1992, moved to Public Relations as a Public Relations aide.

Editorial writer **JOHN ANDERSON** has retired, after 38 years at The Post. Anderson joined News as a reporter and worked as a general assignment reporter, chief education writer, day city editor and had two assignments as an editorial writer, in 1961-67 and in 1971-1995.

POST SCRIPTS

USE IT OR LOSE IT

The deadline for submitting claims for 1995 medical and child care spending accounts is February 1. Please note that any monies remaining in the account after the claim deadline may not be rolled over into a spending account for 1996.

SPECIAL OFFER, LIMITED TIME

Classified Advertising has developed a new weekly marketplace for classified advertising customers wishing to sell an item worth \$100 or less. The two-line ads will run on Saturdays in Classified adjacent to the "Merchandise" listings and are available for an introductory cost of \$5.00 per ad. After Jan. 27, the cost will increase to \$10 for a two-line ad. Additional lines are \$10 each. Employees wishing to place an ad should type the two lines (a line consists of 28-30 characters, including spaces and punctuation) and send it via interoffice mail to Classified Advertising "Under \$100," along with a personal check as payment and a telephone number where you can be reached. Employees wishing to pay cash or with a credit card for

the ad may do so at the Front Counter, not to the 6th floor Classified Advertising department. Deadline for ad placement is Thursday, January 18, 5 p.m. Please do not personally deliver the ad to the Classified Advertising department.

ACQUISITIONS

Gazette Newspapers, owned by The Washington Post Company, has signed a letter of intent to purchase Comprint, Inc., a major commercial printer and publisher of newspapers serving military bases in the Washington, D.C. area. The acquisition is expected to close in February. Both companies are located in Gaithersburg. Gazette Newspapers publishes 16 newspapers and a monthly business publication in Montgomery

Co. and Mt. Airy with a combined circulation of 245,000. Gazette Newspapers currently prints its newspapers at three outside printers in three states. Over the next several months, the company will move its printing work to Comprint, one of the largest commercial printers in the Washington area. Comprint will continue its commercial printing business, which includes printing newspapers serving military bases as well as handling production and advertising sales for those publications.

Post-Newsweek Cable, owned by The Washington Post Company, has completed the acquisition of a cable system in Texarkana, Texas, from Cox Communications. An agreement in principle for the pur-

chase was announced in August 1995. The purchase price was not disclosed. The system serves approximately 24,000 subscribers in Texarkana, Texas and Arkansas, as well as Nash, Wake Village, and Bowie City, Texas. Post-Newsweek Cable now serves approximately 539,000 subscribers in 16 states.

INDUSTRY NEWS

The New York Times will begin publishing a Northeast edition in 1997 to be printed in Washington, D.C., and Boston. The Times already prints a three-section national edition and a four-section edition that is distributed in the New York metropolitan area and the Northeast. In 1996, the Times also plans to reduce its staff by 190 positions.



The Gazette Newspapers, headquarters building shown above, has signed a letter of intent to purchase Comprint (logo at right).



MARKETPLACE

NEED A HOUSE-SITTER? Post correspondent and spouse seek a house or apartment to sit during Jan. and Feb., pretty much anywhere, though Northern Virginia would be best. We're good with pets, plants and roof repairs. Call Jim Rupert, x7400 or (703) 893-0290.

FOR SALE—'92 Toyota Corolla. Four-door, auto., A/C, power steering, AM/FM. Excellent condition, 65K miles. \$8,200. Call (301) 645-8673 or (301) 934-1081 (Southern Md. Bureau).

CHERRY RED 1992 Pontiac Transport van. Mint condition. Extended warranty. Tilt wheel, cruise, dual AC, tape, power seats & windows. Seats 7 and has huge cargo area. \$10,000. Call Cindy, x5072 or (202) 686-6156.

FOR SALE—'91 Honda Civic hatchback. Four-speed, two new tires, AC, cassette tape, 32K miles, great condition. \$6,999. Call Barbara, (301) 946-0249.

FOR SALE—Gerry baby carrier—backpack style, deluxe model. Like new. Holds infants and toddlers up to 40 pounds. \$40/obo. Call Bruce, (301) 322-1808.

FOR RENT—Four blocks from Post, 2BR apartment, great kitchen, hardwood floors, built-in bookshelves. \$845/mo. plus electric, gas. Rental parking available. Call Paul, x7669 or (202) 483-8282.

FOR SALE—Vintage '50's kitchen chairs—chrome and vinyl. Classics! Some rust. \$35 for set of four. Also, vintage clothing—Ladies' suits, dresses, blouses, size 6 to 8, and purses, from '40's and '50's, \$12 to \$45. Call x6437 or (301) 589-5381.

DIAMOND RING FOR SALE—Oval brilliant-cut diamond set, wide twist-style yellow gold band. Weighs just over 1.11 carats. Well-cut with excellent symmetry; color and clarity grade of "F." Appraised at \$8,200. Will sell for \$4,000. **SERIOUS BUYERS ONLY**, please. Call Terri, x5423 or (703) 528-1808.

MARKETPLACE DEADLINE: Noon Fridays. Please include your name, extension and home phone number. **ADS ARE FOR POST EMPLOYEES ONLY.** Send ads to Shop Talk, 7th floor, or call x6803. To send ads via fax dial x5609; via e-mail send to **shoptalk**. Ads run two issues unless otherwise requested. One ad per employee, please.

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