

[ The Washington Post ]

# Style

C

MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2009

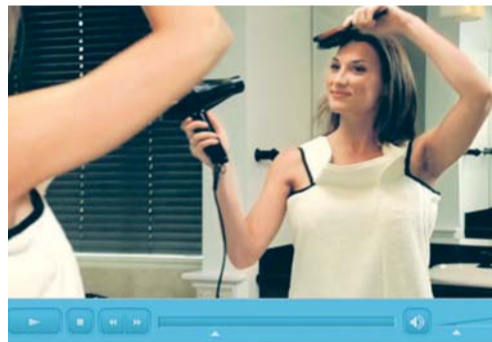
5



BY JULIA EWAN — THE WASHINGTON POST

## Just Let It Soak In

Can't Wrap a Towel Around Yourself? Well, Wrap Your Brain Around This!



Fed up with old-fashioned towels? Wearable Towels are designed to be both functional and, well... worn. Really, you can wear them.

By MONICA HESSE  
Washington Post Staff Writer

"Our main goal," says Zoni Stein — businessman, inventor, visionary — "is to put the towel of today into the Metropolitan Museum. Because we just made that towel *history*." History, as in: Antique. Vestigial. Obsolete. "Eventually, you'll go into someone's house and say, 'You have a towel?'"

Instead of what Stein thinks they should have, which is a Wearable Towel: The Towel With Arm Openings.

In the product's video, viewable at [www.WearableTowel.com](http://www.WearableTowel.com) and going viral online, a svelte woman struggles to wrap herself in a towel. "You want to stay covered after being *wet*," a chipper voice off-camera explains, "but your towel just won't *let*." Finally, the woman gives up on the complex piece of terrycloth and wanders out of the frame. But after a few seconds, she's back, this time wrapping herself in a towel that miraculously becomes a tunic, due to technology best described as "three holes cut on each side of an otherwise ordinary towel." The male wrapping method, which we later see modeled on a grown man cavorting in his yard and at a barbecue, results in a giant floppy toga. Both versions are designed in response to that common problem: *Maneuvering this towel is*

*so difficult, guess I'll have to call in sick and drip dry. Again.*

"I've always had this inventive kind of streak," says Stein, 30, who lives in Miami and works for an investment firm when he's not pushing towels. "I always see what bothers me. I write down lists of what bothers me." Like the fact that red wine should be served warm and white wine should be served cold and there's no way to store them both in the same bottle — that bothers him.

And the towel? "The towel bothered me." It left him, he said, so frequently naked, the victim of slippage or snaggage. So one day he grabbed a pair of scissors and began snipping and wrapping, re-snipping and re-wrapping, until he'd fashioned something he thought he could work with. "I tried it and I was amazed at how it covered my entire body," Stein says. "I was amazed at how it felt like it was meant to be."

"You can be," he adds, "totally undressed under this Towel." For just \$19.95, plus shipping and handling.

Now the Wearable, which Stein says is produced in a Turkish factory, has become a family affair:

"My brother Ari —" also a star of Bravo's real-

See TOWEL, Page C2

### MEDIA NOTES

## The Press Loves a Hero, but . . .

Presidential Commission Won't Save Newspapers

By HOWARD KURTZ  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Dan Rather is wrong. Barack Obama should stay out of it. We don't need no stinkin' presidential commission.

It's not that the former CBS anchor has delivered a flawed diagnosis. The news business, as Rather wrote in a Washington Post op-ed, is in deep trouble, particularly the print side. But his prescription — that only high-level White House involvement can draw sufficient attention to the media's plight — badly misses the mark.

This president may be able to bring Henry Louis Gates and James Crowley together for a beer. Obama might even figure out how to get Congress to cough up a health-care bill, or Americans to understand what on earth cap-and-trade is. But rescuing the news business is beyond his power.

Actually, by giving interviews to Katie Couric, Charlie, Meredith and Robin — not to mention "60 Minutes," "Nightline," the Sunday shows, Jay Leno, ESPN, major newspapers, columnists and bloggers — Obama has helped prop up the news business and demonstrated that it matters. But the challenge here is not as easy as dropping by Five Guys and boosting its burger business. The journalism racket needs more than some spicy mustard to lure customers.

To be fair, Rather isn't suggesting that Obama

See MEDIA NOTES, Page C5



BY ALLISON JOYCE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Sammy Sackstein, 19, hula-hoops at the Bethel Woods Music Festival.

## All Ages Of Aquarius At Woodstock

By KEITH B. RICHBURG  
Washington Post Staff Writer

BETHEL, N.Y., Aug. 16 — Although only 20, fresh-faced Alexa Grey knew exactly how and where she wanted to spend this hot August weekend: wearing a new tie-dyed dress, surrounded by aging hippies and reliving a concert event-cum-peace movement that happened two decades before she was born.

So Grey and her boyfriend, Steve Suchan, 21, both students at the University of Maryland in College Park, drove up here while touring summer music festivals in New York and Canada, and they ended up in a muddy field next to Hector's Inn, the unofficial gathering place for grizzled Woodstock veterans and newcomers who just wanted to share the experience.

For Grey and Suchan, it was their way to connect tangibly to a time when youth gained power and set out to change the world.

"It's so important, this movement that's going on," said Grey, who is originally from Baltimore. "It's a trend now for kids to think about peace."

She continued: "Since the original Wood-

See WOODSTOCK, Page C2

## For Nats Wives, Life Around This Diamond Isn't So Glittery

By KATE KILPATRICK  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Ah, the baseball-wife stereotype — vapid, idle beauties. They sling their Louis Vuitton purses atop peanut shells and during the seventh-inning stretch schedule brunch and waxing appointments.

These women — so glammed up they make you wonder whether the Diamond Club seats they sit in are named for the eight-carat rocks that adorn their manicured fingers — boast tight and toned bikini bods. They're not afraid to strut their stuff in racy men's magazines and they're not above using their husbands' transgressions as bargaining chips for tennis bracelets and sports cars.

But for the spouses of the Washington Nationals, the baseball-wife stereotypes belong in a fantasy league of their own.

Everyone thinks: "Oh my gosh, what a wonderful life you have. You can go shopping every day," says Yormarie Nieves, 30, a former model from Puerto Rico who's married to Nationals backup catcher Wil Nieves.

But the reality, says Rachel Dunn, 27, wife

of first baseman Adam Dunn, who signed a two-year, \$20 million contract with the Nationals in February, is "not even remotely as glamorous as people think."

The life of a baseball wife can be lonely, chaotic and uncertain. And when your husband plays for the worst team in baseball, there is even less pretense of glamour.

As they wind their way through the muggy dog days of August — what some consider the most unpleasant time of year in D.C. — the Washington Nationals remain last in their division, 24 games behind the Phillies. Their 43-75 record is the worst in Major League Baseball. They're on pace to lose 103 games this season.

Average attendance at the 41,000-seat ballpark is under 24,000. With seven weeks left in the regular season, the Nationals have to battle their way through 44 more games, all the while knowing there's no chance of postseason play.

See WIVES, Page C8



BY TONI L. SANDYS — THE WASHINGTON POST

From left, Ashley Sterling (fiancee of Collin Balester), Jarah Bergmann (wife of Jason Bergmann), Trey Walden (fiancee of Willie Harris) and Erin Smith (girlfriend of J.D. Martin) at Nationals Park. A player's big league career "could be over tomorrow," Jarah says.



TOP 10 FILMS  
Alien Invasion: 'District 9' Wins At Box Office | C4

NAMES & FACES Fatherhood means no more pot, says Brad Pitt | C3

OPERA "Barber of Seville" coming to Nationals Park | C3 >>

BOOK WORLD "Dark Dreams": Crime & corruption in Slovakia | C3



ASK AMY, C4 · BRIDGE, C7 · CAROLYN HAX, C4 · COMICS, C6-7 · CROSSWORD, C6 · KIDSPost, C8 · MOVIE DIRECTORY, C4 · SUDOKU, C7 · TELEVISION, C5

Online Today >> Dan Zak fields questions about MTV's "The Real World" setting up camp in D.C. | 11 a.m. >> at [washingtonpost.com/discussions](http://washingtonpost.com/discussions)



**TODAY: Hot and sunny**  
**HIGH 93** **LOW 72**  
ILLUSTRATION BY LEX PENNINGTON, 6, ARLINGTON

# KidsPost



The average high temperature during Maine summers is 70 degrees.

## birthdays of the week

### Monday 17

Bethesda's **Joey Barke** (2002). Waldorf's **Taylor Colbert** (2002). Washington's **Jacoba Harris** (2001). Gaithersburg's **Juliana Koert** (2001). Herndon's **Deegan Kelley** (1999). Ellicott City's **Mark Haver** (1998). Springfield's **John Ray** (1997). Clifton's **Christian Tae** (1997).



### Tuesday 18

Gainsville's **Griffin Carroll** (2003). Bethesda's **Asher Rubin** (2002). Herndon's **Victoria Almeida** (2001). Towson, Md.'s **Liam Donegan** (2001). Fairfax's **Danny Finan** (2001). Sterling's **Liam DiLallo** (1997). Vienna's **Clark Tilson** and **Victoria Tilson** (1997). Explorer **Meriwether Lewis** (1774).



### Wednesday 19

College Park's **Alexander Swisdak** (2003). Lorton's **Jessica DeSpiegelare** (2002). Poet Ogdan **Nash** (1902). Inventor **Orville Wright** (1871).



### Thursday 20

Arlington's **Quinn Cooper** (2003). Vienna's **Ben Fritton** (2003). Vienna's **Mimi Mennel** (2003). North Potomac's **Allison Saenger** (2003). Dale City's **Jackson Ferguson** (2000).



### Friday 21

Waldorf's **Courtney Carter** (1997). Huntingtown's **Natalie Foreman** (1997).



### Saturday 22

Falls Church's **Camille Blakemore** (2003). Washington's **Jalen Marrow-Jackson** (2003). Arlington's **Taylor Price** (2003). Centreville's **Madison Stalfort** (2003). Silver Spring's **Ronan Pleszkoch** (2002). Frederick's **Parin Kumar** (2001). Landover Hills' **Ozzi Uka** (1998).



### Sunday 23

Severn's **Carly Mower** (2000). Vienna's **Matthew Becht** (1999).



Birthdays are for ages 6 to 13 and are printed on a first-come, first-served basis. They must be submitted by an adult. We need photos at least two months ahead of publication. Don't forget to include name, address and birth date (including year of birth). Send to [kidspost@washpost.com](mailto:kidspost@washpost.com) or KidsPost, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071.



## 2009 SUMMER OF KIDSPOST

# Water, Water, Everywhere in Maine



Megan Pinalto, 9, and her brother Nathan, 6½, of Rockville vacationed in Belfast, Maine. They enjoyed swimming and paddling in Belfast's Swan Lake, as well as sailing in Camden Harbor and touring Acadia National Park. We're impressed that they managed to keep their KidsPost dry!

Do you want to show the world where you went on vacation? We'll be printing pictures of KidsPost readers on vacation each Monday during the summer. Send a picture of you, your family, your friends, even your dog, with KidsPost to [kidspost@washpost.com](mailto:kidspost@washpost.com). Include the names, ages and home towns of everyone in the photograph and tell us something cool about the place you're visiting. Please include a phone number where you can be reached in case we have any questions.

## MAKE A DATE

Have a root beer float this week! On Aug. 19, 1893, the first root beer float, called Black Cow Mountain, was served in Colorado.



### MONDAY 17

On this day in 1978, three Americans became the first to travel across the Atlantic Ocean in a balloon.

### TUESDAY 18

On this day in 1920, Tennessee ratified the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave American women the right to vote.

### WEDNESDAY 19

Today is National Aviation Day.



### THURSDAY 20

Happy 35th birthday to actress Amy Adams! (She played Amelia Earhart in "Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian.")

### FRIDAY 21

On this day in 1959, Hawaii became the 50th state.

### SATURDAY 22

Your entry here.

### SUNDAY 23

Your entry here.

## FRAZZ



## Style

# Big League Life Is No Day at the Park for Wives

WIVES, From Page C1

Sitting in the wives' section behind home plate, there are no outspoken Anna Bensons, the Southern babe who once told Howard Stern that if hubby Kris Benson, who at the time pitched for the Mets, cheated on her she would sleep with the entire Mets team. There is no clothes-shedding Heidi Hamels, the busty blond "Survivor" star and wife of Phillies heartthrob ace pitcher Cole Hamels.

Despite their youth and beauty, none of the women married to the members of the Washington Nationals are regulars on bloggers' lists of "Hottest Baseball Wives."

Not that they care. For the most part, they describe themselves as laid-back and low-key.

"I am lucky to be able to take a shower every day," says Abby Kearns, wife of right fielder Austin Kearns, sipping a glass of white wine at an Old Town Alexandria restaurant near her home. "I'm just so busy, honestly, trying to take care of the kids."

Kearns's 2-year-old, Brady, who they learned recently has autism, has therapy four days a week.

"Our kids get sick and have disabilities like everyone else," Kearns says. "Life doesn't stop just because you travel and your husband plays baseball."

The Nats wives are younger than those on other teams. Many of the women grew up in smaller cities like Toledo, Ohio; Lexington, Ky.; and Florence, Ala. They are mostly new to the big leagues, and have little experience living far from home.

And while they might not worry about mortgages and tuition bills like millions of Americans, Kearns says there are plenty of other stresses to make up for that — like maintaining two homes (one in Washington and one in their home town) and knowing you may have to pack and move at a moment's notice.

You have to lead screaming children through crowded airports every week, handle the family finances, deal with rumors about groupies and on-the-road affairs. You might even have to give up career ambitions to live your partner's dream.

Hardest of all: trying to keep the family together while your husband travels eight months every year.

"It's basically like being a single parent," says Kearns.

Which is all made worse when your husband plays for a team that loses far more games than it wins.

**Jorge Padilla, right, the 5-year-old son of Nats outfielder Jorge Padilla, poses with his cousin Diego Rivera, 3, for their moms earlier this month at Nationals Park.**



BY TONI L. SANDYS — THE WASHINGTON POST

"You're in it together," she says. "Your husband comes home upset, you're upset. When he has a great game, you feel like you had a great game."

"Losing is hard for everybody. Nobody wants a losing team," Liz Johnson says during an interview in her living room two weeks before her husband, first baseman Nick Johnson, was dealt to the Florida Marlins.

"You hate to fail every day. That's really tough for the players. They go out there wanting to win and it's a big letdown when it doesn't happen day after day after day."

"All these guys for the most part have been the creme de la creme of their high school, college, whatever," says Rachel Dunn, on the phone from Texas where she's just put her 2-year-old son (also named Brady) to bed. "They're used to being winners. They're used to being first place in whatever they do. I know Adam has that mentality — it's really hard for him to lose."

During the season, a number of Nationals players rent executive apartments in Arlington or Alexandria, both just minutes from D.C.

King Street, the downtown strip in Old Town Alexandria, is lined with wine bars, bistros, taverns and boutiques. It's the kind of

leafy, red-brick suburb where, if this were another city and a big leaguer and his wife were spotted slurping oysters, fans would gawk or request autographs or at least snap a cellphone photo.

Not here. "[Adam] is rarely recognized in D.C.," says Rachel Dunn. "One time this whole season I think we've gone out and someone's recognized him."

Liz Johnson and Yormarie Nieves, whose husbands played for the Yankees before signing with the Nationals, find the D.C. lifestyle far more relaxed.

"It's really hard to play in New York because you're in the spotlight no matter what you're doing. Everyone knows who you are," says Johnson. "With Washington, they're not really as popular or as good of a team, so we are left out of the spotlight. Nobody's really interested [in the wives]. Which is fine. I don't feel like it should be any other way."

Forget the wives. Many residents aren't interested in the players either.

D.C. was mostly Orioles territory once the Washington Senators left for Texas in 1972. As a new, young team, the Nationals have had a hard time building their fan base. Especially because they keep losing.

Washingtonians — accustomed to bad press about the team — haven't yet acquired

the passion and excitement for their baseball team evidenced in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago or New York. In the nation's capital, the national pastime plays a faint second fiddle to power, politics, and of course, the Redskins.

"[Wil] gets recognized in New York more than here," Nieves says.

Plus, the team is low on marquee players, and flaunts no perennial all-stars. Even Johnson, who was one of the Nationals' highest-paid players before the trade, received limited exposure here because of repeated injuries.

And so many of the young players who've yet to acquire leverage are at the mercy of front-office executives who can move them at any time.

"Especially with [the Nats], you are in and out so much," says Liz Johnson. "You just go with whatever happens. You have no control over it anyway."

It's a fact 25-year-old Jarah Bergmann knows well.

Her husband, Jason, a right-handed pitcher for the Nationals, has been sent down to Class AAA Syracuse three times this season.

"This year we've been bounced quite a bit," Jarah said earlier this summer, standing in the Nationals Park family room, which is arranged with flat-screen TVs, leather armchairs and children's toys. Wearing a green, cotton sundress and Ray-Ban sunglasses, the bubbly brunette empties her mailbox while her husband clears his gear out of the clubhouse.

Just the day before, Jarah says, she was eating pizza in New York when Jason broke the news to her that he was being sent to the minors via text message.

"He didn't know how to tell me again," says Bergmann, who'd planned to join Jason in New York for the Nats' series against the Mets. "I think he was ashamed it happened again."

They each immediately flew back to D.C., where they had 72 hours to pack up their apartment and meet the Triple-A team on the road in Buffalo.

They stayed up till 2 a.m. piling their belongings into a black Ford F-150 truck (they've given up their smaller, sportier cars, which couldn't handle their back-and-forth lifestyle). Jarah says they left behind all their groceries, and gave neighbors toilet paper and other items that they buy in bulk.

"We actually live cheaply," she says. "When you first get called up and you're really excited ... you might overspend a bit. But then it sinks in: We have to make this last."

"His career could be over tomorrow," Jarah says, heading back to the truck as Jason walks toward her, overhearing the conversation.

"Thanks," he says. (Bergmann was called up on July 5.)

For nearly every wife, fiancée or girlfriend who gets sent down to the minors with a player, another arrives in the minors.

"People say in the majors, once you get a taste of it you never want to go back," says Ashley Sterling, sitting in the family room during a rain-delayed game against St. Louis. Col-

lin Balester, her fiancé, was called up from Syracuse late that afternoon to make his first big league start of the season. (The pitcher excited after the fourth inning; the Cardinals won, 4-1.)

"Within the baseball community, it definitely is a 'we' thing. 'We got traded' or 'We got sent down,' you know. 'We got called up,'" the 22-year-old Sterling says.

"It might sound kind of weird to people who aren't in baseball, because they might think, 'Oh, Collin got called up.' But it's so much more than that. It's my life, too. We sacrifice a lot to be with them."

Because of the long season and constant travel, baseball — compared with other sports — is especially hard on families.

Therefore, making friends with the other wives is key, they say.

"Our families aren't around. Our friends are back in our home towns where they live," says Rachel Dunn. "We're really all each other has."

So when the July 31 trade deadline approached, the wives wondered which of them might be saying goodbye.

Liz Johnson — whose husband's name had been mentioned in a number of trade rumors — expected their days with the Nationals were numbered.

"But then the deadline passed, so we thought we were in the clear," she says. "Then I got a phone call at 4:10 — 10 minutes after the deadline passed."

Nick had been traded to the Florida Marlins. (He was back at Nationals Park earlier this month — playing for the visiting team.)

"I'll probably go to the family room and say goodbye and it'll be weird because I don't belong there anymore," Liz says over the phone, as she takes a quick break from last-minute sightseeing in D.C.

Johnson says she'll miss the friendships she made with Nationals wives. But she acknowledges there are upsides to the trade — and not just that the native Californian will be closer to the beach.

At last she'll watch her husband play on a winning team again.

"It definitely makes watching the game a little different, because you know there's potentially going to be an extended season. So you're watching with a little bit more anxiousness," she says. "Now we have a little more at stake."

After a long, rough season, many of the wives are looking forward to the offseason break, when they can relax with their husbands. Sterling and Balester plan to marry in October, and honeymoon in Aruba. The Duns are expecting their third child in November. For the Bergmanns, the best plans are no plans.

"We like to just lounge around the house and really not do that much," Jarah says.

Of course her husband, along with the others, will keep training for the next season. She says Jason hopes to finally secure a stable spot on the Nationals roster.

As for her hopes for next season: "A good, solid year, where we're here all year," she says. "It would be really nice."