



With The Washington Times' Executive Editor Out, Will John Solomon Finally Make The Masthead? - Tom McDevitt

Betsy Rothstein
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Back in January, after 25 members of The Washington Times newsroom got laid off, John Solomon was named to the elusive role of Chief Digital Officer with Ian Bishop as his deputy in the position of Digital Editor. Bishop made the masthead. Solomon did not. What made matters even more peculiar, is that when Solomon made media appearances, on WTOP for example, they said he was from Washington Guardian, his other news outlet. No mention of The Washington Times.

Even in May of 2013, The Washington Times gave him a bizarre tagline that made no mention of The Washington Times except to say he was a former executive editor there. Was he or wasn't he working there? His daily doings always appeared to be mired in mystery, even to those on the inside.

Still, now Solomon is getting another boost. Today Larry Beasley, whose contract as President and CEO has been upped until the end of 2015, is promoting him again. At least it sure looks like a promotion — time will tell if they see fit to put him on the masthead. This time, he's "Editor and Vice President for Content and Business Development." What this all means is anyone's guess, as was Solomon's previous position at The Washington Times. As hilariously explained by Beasley in a statement, this means Solomon is in charge of editorial and business and advertising, because those parts of a newspaper are always supposed to be smushed together as one. No conflict there.

What's even weirder is that Beasley appears to have no recollection of Solomon's brusque departure from The Washington Times four years ago as Executive Editor and speaks about his time there as a fairytale dream (all together now: raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens...) Most former employees in high editorial posts say he was pushed out, forced to resign. He always insists otherwise.

Just as you think Beasley's statement will end there, with four graphs and five bullet points inflating Solomon to be the best journalist who ever roamed the Earth (seriously), Beasley casually mentions that Executive Editor David Jackson is gone. HUH? "As part of the recent moves, we've said goodbye to some of colleagues, including our Executive Editor David Jackson," he wrote three graphs from the bottom of the release, one of which throws in yet another compliment for Solomon. "We appreciate the effort he gave us and wish him well in his next endeavor."

Bye bye Jackson!

See the release with our boldings...

"Today I am naming John Solomon to the joint role of Editor and Vice President for Content and Business Development, where he will have broad responsibility for the content, audience and business strategies of the company. In this role he will oversee all news and opinion content in the newsroom as well as the advertising, sales and digital departments on our business side.

John has consistently been one of the country's most compelling journalists over the last two decades. He has personally broken some of the most important stories while leading the reporters and editors around him to do the same. During his earlier stint at The Washington Times in 2008-09, the paper routinely produced compelling stories in print, online, radio and TV that attracted new audiences, created impact and won some of the profession's highest honors. That's exactly what I and the ownership want in this next phase of rebuilding the Times.

But just as importantly, John has pressed, pushed and prodded our profession to stretch beyond traditional business models and embrace the new audience and monetization opportunities of the 21st century. In his earlier stint four years ago, John helped the Times significantly improve the audience reach and financial condition of this company, and I'm glad he has returned to help put us back on that course to profitability.

In his role as a consultant the last several months, John has worked with me and the executive team of Loveia Johnson, John Martin and Keith Cooperrider to create new partnerships, products and advertising opportunities that have helped improve our company's financial condition. The company's ownership has

been pleased by the progress and asked me to stay on at least through the end of 2015. I'm proud to do so and also to announce some of the executive team's accomplishments:

The Times now has the lowest operating loss in its 31-year history and is poised to reach profitability with the full confidence and financial support of its ownership.

The Times' email list has grown seven-fold from 100,000 people in January to more than 700,000 today, providing a substantial new audience and revenue opportunity.

Advertising revenues have doubled since we reorganized the Ad & Sales Department in March under John Solomon's and Loveia Johnson's leadership.

Under John Martin's leadership, the Times has moved to new printing presses that have given us crisper, cleaner and larger news pages and the ability to reach new audiences in our circulation market.

The Times will be unveiling this summer a new subscription-only national edition of the newspaper, a HTML 5-powered app targeted for tablets, cell phones and mobile devices.

We have secured several new radio, TV and digital partnerships that will be announced in the next few weeks and will unveil both a new national digital edition of the newspaper and a new Web design by Labor Day.

As part of the recent moves, we've said goodbye to some of colleagues, including our Executive Editor David Jackson. We appreciate the effort he gave us and wish him well in his next endeavor.

While there's much good news to share, there's also much more work to be done to reach profitability and to improve the compelling nature of our news and opinion reports. John's appointment today moves us forward on the path toward those goals.

The Washington Times, LLC is a newspaper and multimedia company with headquarters in Washington, DC. It publishes The Washington Times, The Washington Times National Weekly and washingtontimes.com. It has gained a reputation for thorough news coverage, hard-hitting investigative reporting and stimulating commentary. The company provides radio programming to Washington, with the 'Andy Parks ... Live from The Washington Times' program, heard locally on WWRC and nationally on www.washingtontimes.com."