

If you missed the recent Xplor MidAtlantic Region event, a tour of the Washington Post Plant in Springfield, VA, you missed out on some interesting facts. Did you know the Washington Post has been around for nearly 134 years and the price of the first paper was just 3 cents? This is just one of the facts our host, Mr. Allan Kohan, shared with us that day.

Allan has been with the Post for 40 years prior to his official retirement when he was the Building Manager and Production Manager. He started with the Post when he was going to school at the University of Maryland at night and serving an apprenticeship at the Post. After many years of various management positions, he now works for the Washington Post as host for the tours, a job he loves – it shows with his knowledge and enthusiasm.

Some interesting facts Allan shared with us include:

- There are 17 Auto Guidance Vehicles (AGV's) used to pull the rolls of paper and take them to the presses – computer-to-computer controlled
- A roll of paper is 2500 lbs. , they use 230 rolls per edition, 29,000 pages per roll, and one roll lasts only 30 minutes on the press
- Printing for a given day begins at 10:45 pm when they run 100,000 copies as the early edition – these are then sent out via plane, train, truck, or bus (non-local)
- At 12:45 the local editions begin printing with changes as necessary through the night with updates resulting in a total of 4 different editions
- The last paper must be ready to go out the door by 5:00 although most often is it done by 4:30; rush hour starts and paper deliveries need to get out!
- The paper contains 23% recycle fiber, because of the tension on the presses they can not use anything more
- They separate the printed waste and the non-printed waste – the non-printed waste can be recycled quicker
- The total amount of paper they use in 1 week would wrap around the world twice
- They used to receive their rolls of paper by boat from Canada but now it comes by train and is delivered to the Robinson Terminal just out their back door
- The presses are run by 7 people and are 5 stories tall
- They print 700,000 daily papers and 800,000 Sunday editions
- The paper expense is the greatest cost associated with printing, even greater than salaries
- Advertising is the number one source of revenue for the paper
- When a press is not running it is receiving scheduled preventive maintenance – nothing is ever idle

To get the paper out on time requires great coordination involving many people. The objective is to fill the paper either with news or advertisements.

The internet and the economy provided a double blow to the newspaper industry. The industry aged 10 years faster than expected with these influences. Allan says the newspaper still has

value for this and probably the next generation. After all, without paper what would you put at the bottom of the bird cage or use to swat a fly?

Alan gave each of the attendees a Special Inauguration Edition of the Washington Post from Tuesday, January 20, 2009 with the headline “America’s 44<sup>th</sup> President”, “Obama Takes Oath”. He also gave us a plate dated Monday, July 21, 1969 with the headline that reads “‘The Eagle Has Landed’ – Two Men Walk on the Moon”.

Thanks to Allan, we had yet another successful MAR event. Special thanks to our Friends of MAR for their financial support along with the handouts and give-a-ways for the attendees.

Stay tuned to the MidAtlantic web site for updates on additional events planned for this year. If you are interested in joining us for a future tour of the Washington Post Plant, drop us a note. If there is enough interest we will schedule another event like this.