

NPR Blogs: Vox Politics

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<http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/?ft=1&f=92181432>

Adieu, Adieu, To You And You And You

by Evie Stone

Well, friends, today marks the swan song for Vox Politics as we close out our election unit until the 2010 midterms. This is our final post in this space. On December 1st, our esteemed colleague and friend **Ken Rudin** will pick up NPR's political blogging mantle with a daily blog version of his beloved [Political Junkie](#) column.

As I return to radio-land I offer my deepest gratitude to all of our contributors and editors, and of course to our readers and commenters as well. To all the members of the NPR election division who turn into pumpkins after today: we will miss you immensely.

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/adieu_adieu_to_you_and_you_and.html?ft=1&f=92181432

The Keys To Succession

by Evie Stone

As we noted in [yesterday's roundup](#), the selection of AZ Governor Janet Napolitano for Homeland Security Secretary will elevate Republican Secretary of State Jan Brewer to the Grand Canyon State's [Governor's condo](#).

Mike Memoli, filling in for Ambinder, [has an exhaustive and fascinating look at](#) some other potential Obama appointees whose selection could lead to party-changes in Governorships and Senate seats.

The Democratic Governors of Kansas, Montana, Pennsylvania, and Virginia would have Republican successors, and if Rhode Island Senator Jack Reed gets a political appointment, GOP Gov. Don Carcieri would select his replacement. But if one of Maine's moderate Republican Senators is tapped for a cabinet job, the Democrats could gain a seat with an appointment from Gov. John Baldacci...which would be huge if the Dems get to 59 with an [Al Franken](#) or [Jim Martin](#) Senate victory (and could be a potential reason for Susan Collins or Olympia Snowe to pass on an appointment offer).

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/the_keys_to_succession.html?ft=1&f=92181432

More White House Staff Announcements

by NPR Political Unit

From the transition office:

President-Elect Obama and Vice President-Elect Biden Announce Key White House Staff

WASHINGTON — President-Elect Obama and Vice President-Elect Biden today announced the following White House staff: Patrick Gaspard, Director of the Office of Political Affairs; Jackie Norris, Chief of Staff to First Lady; Catherine (Cathy) M. Russell, Chief of Staff for Dr. Jill Biden; Cynthia Hogan, Counsel to the Vice President; and Moises (Moe) V. Vela, Jr., Director of Administration for the Office of the Vice President.

President-Elect Barack Obama said, "This group of public servants will bring decades of expertise to my administration, and I'll rely on their counsel and hard work as we fix our struggling economy and meet the great challenges of our time. Vice President-Elect Biden and I look forward to continuing our work with these outstanding individuals who have dedicated their careers to a better America."

Vice President-Elect Joe Biden said, "These individuals all possess incredible integrity and an unmatched commitment to public service. Cathy Russell has a unique blend of policy and management experience, combined with an ardent commitment to ending injustices around the world. Cynthia Hogan is a brilliant lawyer who was instrumental in guiding the Senate Judiciary Committee through some of its most important challenges in both crime control and judicial selection, and has shown incredible legal acumen and integrity over her career. I'm grateful to have Moe Vela, a man with experience in White House management and broad outreach skills on my team. Their combined experience, diverse leadership and esteemed counsel will be essential in helping the Obama-Biden Administration bring the change we need to America."

Bios after the jump.

— Evie Stone

The White House Staff Announcements are below:

Patrick Gaspard, Director of the Office of Political Affairs

Gaspard currently serves as the Associate Director of Personnel for the Presidential Transition Team and served as National Political Director for Obama's presidential campaign. Previously, Gaspard served as the Executive Vice President of Politics and Legislation for Local 1199 SEIU, United Healthcare Workers East, the largest local union in America, where he helped coordinate political activity and government relations on behalf of 300,000 members. In 2006, Gaspard served as the acting political director for SEIU International during the national union's successful effort to help Democrats capture majorities in the House and Senate. In 2004, Gaspard was the National Field Director for America Coming Together. Gaspard worked for Governor Howard Dean's presidential campaign and numerous congressional candidates, and campaigns going back to the historic Mayoral election in New York in 1989. Gaspard is a former community organizer around school reform issues. He is married with two children.

Jackie Norris, Chief of Staff to the First Lady

Norris joined Obama's presidential campaign in January 2007 and served as the Iowa Senior Advisor during the caucus campaign, later serving as the Iowa State Director for the successful 2008 general election campaign in Iowa. Originally from Ossining, New York, Norris started her career in the office of Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter. She later served as Vice President Al Gore's scheduler and events planner and as Director of Scheduling and Advance for HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo. Norris served as

finance director for Governor Tom Vilsack's 1998 gubernatorial campaign and as Gore's political director during the Iowa caucuses during his 2000 presidential bid. In 2002, Norris became a classroom teacher for high school history and government at three high schools in Perry, Ames and Johnston, Iowa. Norris, a 1992 graduate of SUNY: College at Geneseo, obtained secondary education teacher certification in 2002 from Iowa State University and Masters in Political Science in 2008. Norris is the 2005 award recipient of the James Madison Fellowship and serves as Vice Chair of the Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa Freedom Fund Board. Norris and her husband John are residents of Des Moines, Iowa and have five-year-old twin boys, Hunter and Cole, and a two-year-old son, Sam.

Catherine (Cathy) M. Russell, Chief of Staff for Dr. Jill Biden

Cathy Russell is a long time advisor to Dr. Biden and advocate for the prevention of violence against women, both at home and abroad. During the 2008 Presidential campaign, Ms. Russell served as Chief of Staff for Dr. Biden. Previously, she has been a Senior Advisor to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on international women's issues. In the Clinton Administration, she served as Associate Deputy Attorney General. On Capitol Hill, she was Staff Director of the Senate Judiciary Committee and also served as a senior counsel to Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT). She received her J.D. from George Washington University.

Cynthia Hogan, Counsel to the Vice President

Cynthia Hogan has been a legal advisor to Vice President-elect Biden for nearly 20 years, first joining his staff in 1991 as his Counsel for Constitutional Law on the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, then as Staff Director and finally as Chief Counsel, during his tenure as Chairman. During her time working for then-Chairman Biden (1991-1996), the Committee successfully passed the landmark 1994 Violence Crime and Control Act and the Violence Against Women Act. She also advised Chairman Biden during the Supreme Court nominations process for both Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer. Cynthia Hogan is a native of Cincinnati, Ohio. She graduated in 1979 from Oberlin College and received a J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1984, where she served as an editor on the Virginia Law Review. She clerked for the Honorable Edward Cahn on the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and was an associate at the Washington, DC law firm Williams & Connolly. She currently lives in Bethesda, Maryland with her husband Mark Katz and their two children.

Moises (Moe) V. Vela, Jr., Director of Administration for the Office of the Vice President

Moe Vela will bring a wealth of business management skill and outreach experience to the Obama-Biden Administration. From 1996-2000, he served as Chief Financial Officer and Senior Advisor on Hispanic Affairs for Vice President Al Gore. Most recently, Vela was the founder and a partner at The Comunidades Group, a multi-family acquisition and operations company headquartered in Denver, Colorado. Vela is a graduate of the University of Texas with a B.A. in Government, received a J.D. from St. Mary's Law School and is a member of the State Bar of Texas. He currently resides in Denver, Colorado and is a Denver Civil Service Commissioner, appointed by Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper. Vela is a native of the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and hails from a pioneer South Texas family.

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http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/more_white_house_staff_announc.html?ft=1&f=92181432

Clinton, Geithner, Richardson Tapped For Cabinet Posts

by Evie Stone

A source close to the Obama transition team's decision making process has confirmed to NPR's **Juan Williams** that New York Fed Chief [Timothy Geithner](#) has accepted an offer to serve as Treasury Secretary in the Obama administration. New Mexico Governor [Bill Richardson](#) has been selected to head the Commerce Department. Both appointments will be announced on Monday.

The transition team will announce after Thanksgiving that Senator [Hillary Clinton](#) has accepted an offer to be Secretary of State.

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/clinton_geithner_richardson_to.html?ft=1&f=92181432

NYT: Clinton Will Accept State Offer

by Evie Stone

The New York Times [is reporting](#) that Hillary Clinton is prepared to accept an offer to serve as Secretary of State in the Obama administration. News organizations have breathlessly followed Clinton's leaked indecision on the matter — as well as the behind-the-scenes negotiations of her vetting process, which included thorough investigations of her husband's post-presidential activities:

People close to the vetting said Mr. Clinton turned over the names of 208,000 donors to his foundation and library and agreed to all of the conditions requested by Mr. Obama's transition team, including restrictions on his future paid speeches and role at his international foundation.

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/nyt_clinton_will_accept_state.html?ft=1&f=92181432

Fred Thompson Returning To Showbiz

by Evie Stone

Former Tennessee Senator Fred Thompson has apparently decided not to run for chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Thompson's former finance chair, B.C. "Scooter" Clippard, [tells the Associated Press](#) that the [lawyer](#)-turned-[actor](#)-turned-[Senator](#)-turned-[actor](#)-turned [Presidential candidate](#)-turned-[guy with a PAC](#) has decided to return his career attentions to the business they call show:

"He has some wonderful opportunities back in the television market that probably financially far outweigh being chair of the RNC," Clippard said.

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/fred_thompson_returning_to_showbiz.html?ft=1&f=92181432

Obama Lends Voice To Chicago Olympic Bid

by Evie Stone

Today the Chicago 2016 delegation made their case to the European Olympic Committees General Assembly, which is taking place in Istanbul. President-elect Obama's contributed to their efforts with [this video](#).

According to the [AP report](#) on the meeting, the Chicago 2016 folks see Obama as a big potential draw to the Windy City:

Photos of Obama were sprinkled throughout Chicago's 20-minute presentation, including a shot of him delivering his acceptance speech in Grant Park. His taped message was introduced by Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, who said they share a goal of inspiring young people to participate in sports.

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/obama_lends_voice_to_chicago_o.html?ft=1&f=92181432

Leaks Spring Eternal

by Evie Stone

The Washington Post's Shailagh Murray and Chris "The Fix" Cillizza [take a look](#) at the Obama operation's switch from airtight campaign to transition leakfest:

"There is nothing they can do about it — vetting and FBI background checks require a lot of calls, and that leads to leaks," explained Steve Elmendorf, a longtime aide to former House minority leader Richard A. Gephardt (D-Mo.) and now a lobbyist in Washington.

And unlike in a campaign, there is now simply more information to disseminate and more outlets chasing the ever-elusive scoop. "It's the era of the Internet; what do you expect?" joked a former Clinton White House senior adviser who is not involved in the transition process.

Luckily for the Obama camp, most of the names floated thusfar have been seemingly well-received — with the exception most notably of campaign finance chair (and Hyatt hotel heiress) Penny Pritzker, who [took herself out of the running](#) for Commerce Secretary yesterday when it became clear that her business entanglements would create problems in the confirmation process.

UPDATE: Another [wave-making](#) potential appointment...[John Brennan](#) as CIA director. Not a popular choice among the netroots left given his ties to the George Tenet legacy.

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/leaks_spring_eternal.html?ft=1&f=92181432

The Governor And The Turkeys

by Evie Stone

In this priceless vid, Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin discusses her political career after symbolically pardoning a turkey at the Triple D Farms in Wasilla. Meanwhile, a guy slaughters the pardoned gobbler's wattled brethren in the background...and MSNBC has some fun with the captions.

The uncensored version is [here](#).

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http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/the_governor_and_the_turkeys.html?ft=1&f=92181432

Friday Morning: Mukasey Recovering; Clinton's State Appointment Is 'On Track'; And It's Midnight For

by Evie Stone

Happy Friday! Just a few short days until turkey time...

We are relieved to report that Attorney General Michael Mukasey [seems to be okay](#) after collapsing during a speech at The Federalist Society last night. He was rushed to George Washington University Hospital from the event, and the DoJ's press office released a statement shortly after midnight saying that Mukasey was "conscious, conversant and alert" but would stay at the hospital overnight for observation. President Bush spoke with the Attorney General by phone this morning, and according to a White House statement he "sounded well".

The latest on Hillary Clinton's possible appointment as Secretary of State: the vetting issues with Bill Clinton's foundation fundraising and international speechmaking have apparently [been resolved](#). The anonymously-sourced phrase that's [making the rounds](#) is that the nomination is "on track" and may be announced shortly after Thanksgiving.

Meanwhile [the NYT reports](#) that if Clinton does not head to State she may get a "still-undefined leadership role" in the Senate. According to the Times, the Senate leadership is trying to come up with an elevated post for Clinton that would not dislodge any other Democrat. It's a tricky situation, since Clinton is still pretty junior. But if she takes the State post, she'll be barred from raising any more money to pay off her remaining \$7.5 million in [campaign debt](#) (\$5.4 million of which she owes to pollster/strategist Mark Penn). So what will she decide?

Via the NYT:

One friend said Mrs. Clinton decided late Wednesday to say no, reasoning that she would have more freedom in the Senate. By midday Thursday, the friend said, she was "back in the indecisive column again." By the end of the day, another associate said she could accept by Friday.

At the end of a confused day in which even Mr. Obama's advisers seemed unsure what was happening, a transition official reached out to reporters Thursday night to say that the president-elect's team believed things were on track with Mrs. Clinton and that her nomination could be announced after Thanksgiving.

In lame-duck White House news, only 60 days remain until inauguration, which, [according to our Peter Overby](#), means today is President Bush's deadline for enacting major federal regulations. One "midnight rule" that's in the works would prevent employees from using paid vacation time as part of their (otherwise unpaid) Family and Medical Leave. [According to the LA Times](#), other last-minute regulations aim to loosen some environmental restrictions:

In recent days, the Bush administration announced new rules to speed oil shale development across 2 million rocky acres in the West. It scheduled an auction for drilling rights alongside three national parks. It has also set in motion processes to finalize major changes in endangered species protection, allow more mining waste to flow into rivers and streams, and exempt factory farms from air pollution reporting.

President-elect Obama could take measures to overturn the new rules after taking office, but the process of doing so is "potentially cumbersome".

And finally, investigative reporter Carl Bernstein [finally met](#) his most notorious source on Sunday. Bernstein and his former Washington Post colleague Bob Woodward visited Mark Felt, the onetime FBI second-in-command who [outed himself](#) in 2005 as "Deep Throat", at his home in California. During the duo's [famous investigation](#) of the 1972 Watergate break-in, "Deep Throat" dealt only with Woodward, providing confirmation of tidbits from the duo's multitude of lower-level sources, as well as indications of the reach and

power of the Nixon campaign's spying operation. Felt, 95, suffers from dementia, but Bernstein told the NYT he had "moments of clarity" during the visit.

Bernstein added, "We were there to pay our respects and gratitude and we conveyed that."

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/friday_morning_mukasey_recover_1.html?ft=1&f=92181432

Handshake Man Sitting This One Out

by Evie Stone

Via the WP, Handshake Man [will not be putting in an appearance](#) at the 2009 Inauguration festivities.

The Rev. Richard C. "Rich" Weaver — dubbed Handshake Man by followers of his exploits — has been Washington's most famous uninvited guest. Now in his early 60s, he has reached out and touched six presidents and countless senators. He was the ultimate man-without-a-ticket, the scourge of the Secret Service and Capitol Police, a hero to wedding crashers and gate jumpers everywhere, all the little people eternally locked outside the velvet ropes of life.

When asked how he penetrated the tightest of security bubbles, Weaver would say simply: "It's just God, buddy."

Weaver has jumped out of the crowd to present every President since Carter with a handshake, a medallion, and a message from God. He was [arrested](#) at the 2005 Inauguration before he managed to greet President Bush, and his sentence requires that he stay of of DC for another year.

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/handshake_man_sitting_this_one.html?ft=1&f=92181432

Boehner Weighs In On Waxman

by Evie Stone

The newly re-elected House Minority Leader [says in a statement](#) that John Dingell's [ouster](#) as chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee to make way for the more liberal Rep. Henry Waxman is evidence that the "Democratic caucus increasingly seems to be pulled leftward by radical special interests."

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/boehner_weighs_in_on_waxman.html?ft=1&f=92181432

Lizard People FTW!

by Evie Stone

As the Franken-Coleman recount continues apace in Minnesota, our friends at [Minnesota Public Radio](#)

provide a few [illustrative contested ballots](#) for your viewing pleasure.

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/lizard_people_ftw.html?ft=1&f=92181432

Pritzker Says She's Not Heading To Commerce

by Evie Stone

In an [email to Lynn Sweet](#), Obama campaign finance chair Penny Pritzker says that — contrary to [rumor](#) — she is not a candidate for Secretary of Commerce.

http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/pritzker_says_shes_not_heading.html?ft=1&f=92181432

Waxman Wins, Dingell out as Energy and Commerce Chair

by Josh Figueira

Evie [previewed it](#) this morning, and now the verdict is in on Waxman vs. Dingell. House Democrats voted 137-122 in favor of giving California Rep. Henry Waxman the chairmanship of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Michigan's John Dingell, the top Democrat on the powerful committee for the past 28 years, will hand over the reins when the 111th Congress convenes in January. Dingell's defeat is seen by some as a blow to the bailout hopes of the "Big Three" who have often counted on the 27-term (soon to be 28-term) Michigan Congressman to defend their interests. The move also strikes a blow to the [seniority system](#) in the House.

There's no doubt Waxman, who has been the top Democrat on the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform since 1997, has what it takes to run a hearing room. Now we'll get to see if he plans to give Ford, GM, and Chrysler the [Roger Clemens treatment](#).

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http://www.npr.org/blogs/politics/2008/11/waxman_wins_dingell_out_as_ene.html?ft=1&f=92181432
