

THE RELIABLE SOURCE | Amy Argetsinger and Roxanne Roberts

'Housewives' Won't Come Clean

It was a moment made for reality TV: At a party Wednesday to honor D.C.'s best dressed, Washingtonian Publisher **Cathy Merrill Williams** was handing out the awards. But when she called for honoree **Lynda Erkiletian** ("for showing that Washington 'housewives' have style!") — no one stepped forward. Erkiletian was missing!

Oh, come on: This *had* to be for the sake of the very conspicuous TV cameras, which Williams had already announced were at the Liaison Capitol Hill Hotel party to capture footage for Bravo's in-development "Real Housewives of Washington."

But no, that's not the case, we're told. Erkiletian, owner of T.H.E. Artist Agency, had ducked out to change. She had dressed in a heavy cape and stockings for what was supposed to be a rooftop affair, but then the party moved indoors to a warm and crowded room. (The TV producers, in fact, asked the magazine to hold off on the announcement until she returned, but Williams kept to her own schedule.)

Another question: What's up with D.C.'s worst-kept secret, the identities of the "Housewives"-to-be? While Bravo maintains that no casting decisions have been finalized, blog buzz is at a peak, and rumored stars are going increasingly public with camera-trailed appearances. Washingtonian, which agreed to allow Bravo's cameras, out-and-out declared Erkiletian a cast member, though the



Lynda Erkiletian, left, Rich Amons and Brooke Kao at the Washingtonian party.

modeling agency chief coyly told us "the only confirmation can come from Bravo." The magazine also picked NoVa venture-capital guy **Rich Amons**, husband of possible star **Mary Amons**, as a "Style Setter," and the cameras floated around both of them, too. The same evening, a production crew filmed Fauquier County winery wife **Michaele Salahi** and husband **Tareq** dining at fancy Inn at Little Washington.

Why won't Bravo confirm what seems so obvious? Probably because nothing's a done deal. It's not unusual for reality producers to spend hours trailing a subject before deciding they just don't work. Meanwhile, said Bravo rep **Rachelle Savoia**, "we're looking for women who have their hands on the pulse of what's going on culturally and politically, who encapsulate what it means to be D.C. society."

DOONESBURY By GARRY TRUDEAU



SORRY, YOU'RE NOT ON THE LIST

One in an occasional series of dispatches from parties you should have crashed.

Event: Friday's Meridian Ball.

Cause: Meridian International's cultural exchange programs.

Attire: Way formal. For this gala, they break out long dresses, real gems (**Debra Lerner Cohen's** stupendous emerald necklace).

Amenities: Open bar, lavish dessert buffet, two dance floors (big band and DJ).

Draw: A rare convergence of D.C. society tribes, brought together by Dem fundraiser/gala chair **Beth Dozoretz**. **Bush** veterans, **Obama** stars, Georgetown scenesters, diplomats, suburban gentry, media gadflies. **Michael Chertoff**, **George Stephanopoulos**, **Adrian**



Parties of Washington society were out for fun at the Meridian Ball on Friday.

Fenty, **Capricia Marshall**, **Franklin Raines**.

Bonus: Starlet **Kerry Washington** (tea-length white chiffon and raspberry dominatrix sandals) hitting the dance floor with White House Deputy Social Secretary **Ebs Burnough**.

Meyers, weighing in.



“The blackmailer was threatening to reveal embarrassing details about Letterman's personal life: For example, after sex, he would always say, 'Stay tuned for Craig Ferguson.'”

— **Seth Meyers** on "Saturday Night Live," one of many members of the late-night fraternity to poke fun over the weekend at **David Letterman's** extortion/sex-with-staffers saga.

(**Jay Leno**, **Jimmy**

Fallon cracked jokes;

Conan O'Brien abstained; Ferguson was pre-taped before the scandal broke.)

HEY, ISN'T THAT . . . ?

■ **Barack and Michelle Obama** dining at Blue Duck Tavern on Saturday for their 17th anniversary. Dark suit, no tie for him, little black dress, no sleeves for her.

■ **Joe Morton** taking the stage with local musicians at BloomBars art space in Columbia Heights on Saturday night. (Oh, you'd totally know him: "The Brother From Another Planet," "Eureka," a million TV guest spots.) Sang "On Broadway" and an original tune.

■ **Sonia Sotomayor** getting a warm greeting Friday night from many in the room at Buck's Fishing & Camping, the Friendship Heights political-elite hangout. Gray pantsuit. Dined with Clinton vet/confirmation shepherd **Ricki Seidman**.

The Obamas celebrated 17 years.



BY KEVIN LAMARQUE — Reuters