

# Radnor Hotel has new 'presidential suite'

*President made stopover at St. Davids on way to netting \$1.25 million for campaign*

By RYAN RICHARDS

**ST. DAVIDS** — As of 4:45 p.m. on Monday, Suite 300 on the third floor of the Radnor Hotel unofficially became known as the "Presidential Suite."

Its first guest — none other than the president of the United States of America.

George W. Bush made a brief stopover at the St. Davids hotel to consult with staffers, relax, eat a light meal and work out before his big campaign fundraiser at the Drexelbrook banquet facility in Drexel Hill. The \$2,000-a-plate event attracted more than 700 party faithful and raised about \$1.25 million for his re-election bid.

"Everyone worked hard to make everything safe and friendly," said Louis Prevost, vice president and general manager of the hotel, about the preparation by staff. "It was exciting for the staff. We were pleased and honored to have the president of the United States stay at the Radnor Hotel."

Prevost said a large contingent of Secret Service and White House communications staff booked about 80 rooms of the 171-room hotel last

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*General Manager*

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Wednesday. The Secret Service conducted a thorough security sweep of the property, he recalled, and special lines were installed for the president's phone system.

During Tuesday's stormy afternoon, the president's motorcade, about 22 vehicles strong, pulled up in front of the hotel entrance, although the president entered the building through a side entrance. Prevost said Radnor police assisted the Secret Service with security, including securing the parking lot. Bomb-sniffing dogs made the rounds, and guests had their luggage inspected.

"They were fine," said Prevost of the other hotel guests. "They had no problem

with the heightened security."

Radnor police deployed 17 officers at the hotel, including plainclothes officers inside the building, said John Rutty, Radnor deputy superintendent, but added that the department still maintained a full complement of officers for routine patrol duty.

"Basically, we were the outer perimeter, meaning that we were the first line of defense, so to speak, to keep him protected," explained Rutty, who remembers when Bush's father stayed at the same hotel during his presidency.

When the commander-in-chief arrived, he was greeted by Stephen Bajus, chairman of the Main Line Chamber of Commerce and majority owner of the hotel. "He welcomed him to Radnor," said Prevost. "It's certainly a lovely place and you have a lovely place here," he remembers the president replying.

Bush also chatted with Michael Taylor, the director of housekeeping, and Maureen McGrady, director of corporate services. A White House photographer snapped photos of the president with hotel executives.

And what did the leader of the free world eat for supper? "I believe it was fruit, salad, a light dinner," remarked the general manager. (Apparently, he preferred healthier fare rather than sample the menu at the political rally — which included Philly cheesesteaks and hoagies.)

The hotel's sous chef, Joe Bonino, prepared the meal under the watchful eye of the presidential food service coordinator "He's going to put it on his resume that he was a chef for the president of the United States," joked Prevost.

The president also worked out — but in private. The hotel staff filled one room with weights and a stationary bicycle.

About 6 p.m., the president and his entourage left the hotel. But before departing through a side entrance to join his motorcade, he commended the hotel staff: "Today's wet weather hasn't dampened the hospitality of your staff here at the hotel," he told Prevost.

Before the president kicked back in Suite 300 on Monday, the Radnor Hotel had eight regular suites. It now has seven regular suites and one new "Presidential Suite."