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**Roxanne Roberts and Amy Argetsinger**  
share gossip from inside the Beltway and beyond.

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## A Typical 'Housewife'? Get Real . . .



Wayne Pacelle, president of the Humane Society of the United States, with Bethenny Frankel, star of "Real Housewives of New York," at a "Save the Seals" cocktail reception Tuesday. (Amy Argetsinger/The Washington Post)

Why would anyone want to become one of "The Real Housewives of Washington"?

Ask a "Real Housewife" of New York. **Bethenny Frankel** did two seasons on the Manhattan version of the hit Bravo reality series, now quietly cultivating a D.C. cast. "I went on the show for a specific reason," she told us. "I was going to build my brand."

We caught up with Frankel on Tuesday at one of those only-in-Washington-in-July events, a 3 p.m. champagne soiree at Policy, a slick new 14th Street bar. All for a good cause, as they say: The Humane Society had corralled several dozen top D.C. chefs and restaurant owners for a cocktail

party celebrating their support of a boycott on seafood from Canadian provinces that allow commercial seal hunting.

Mid-afternoon was the only time to get the chefs together, so leggy models worked a velvet rope in the blazing sunlight while "America's Next Top Model" fashion photographer **Nigel Barker** arranged chefs for a photo shoot, and servers passed around finger food and bubbly. Then the kids from "The Real World" breezed in, camera crew in tow, to capture some scenes. As weird as it sounds.

"I'm a huge animal lover," said Frankel, petite in a belted white sheath dress and buckled high heels. "If it's something that can help animals and it's authentic to me, I'm in."

But -- tell us about "Real Housewives"! Bravo has yet to announce its D.C. cast; the question remains why any reputation-obsessed Washingtonian would want in. Frankel, a natural-foods chef, said she turned down producers "for two months" before deciding it could help her career. Two years later, her advice book "Naturally Thin" is a bestseller and she's about to add a "95-calorie margarita mix" to her line of Skinnygirl snacks.

Reality TV -- can it work for the rest of us? "I knew what the game was," she said. "This was me being honest with the American public about who I am: I'm 37, I don't have kids, people say I'm the real-life Carrie Bradshaw."

Aspiring stars have to find a way to cash in that's "authentic," she said. "Never underestimate the American audience. You can't just say, 'I'm selling bud vases,' and people will buy your bud vases because you were on TV. I was a ripe fruit, ready to be picked. I was ready."

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