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Print Is Not Dead: White Plains Examiner Set for Tuesday Launch

The free weekly newspaper from Examiner Media will appear in White Plains on Tuesday.

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The **WHITE PLAINS** Examiner

Reports of the death of print have apparently been greatly exaggerated. Despite the downward economy, Examiner Media has been proving over the last four years that newspapers can survive, and even thrive.

The White Plains Examiner, a new free weekly newspaper, will appear in newspaper boxes and at local businesses, hospitals, and municipal buildings on Tuesday. It will be the fourth newspaper launched by Examiner Media since it was founded in 2007 by Adam Stone, who serves as publisher for all of the papers.

As the Westchester County seat, White Plains presents a “unique situation” to provide comprehensive coverage of the city, and its inner workings—including its schools, events and local sports—according to Stone, 33.

Coverage will also include surrounding towns like Greenburgh and Harrison, which will receive “some light coverage” from the get-go.

Like the company’s previous papers—The Examiner, The Putnam Examiner, and The Northern Westchester Examiner—the White Plains edition may gradually expand its coverage areas, Stone said, in an “organic” manner and “not part of some long-term strategy.”

Hastings-on-Hudson resident Andrew Vitelli, 25, will serve as editor for The White Plains Examiner. Vitelli joined the company in 2009 to work on the then newly launched Putnam Examiner. He says he is familiar with the city, and has always followed the local sports scene.

Vitelli’s vision for the paper is to “give insight into what’s going on politically and governmentally on the local level.”

“People like reading about themselves and their kids in the paper,” Vitelli said. “They want to be kept informed about decisions that affect their kids. It’s really important that we recognize that, and do a good job covering it.”

Stone says the secret to his company’s success is having a “virtual office,” leaving out the costs that come with having a brick-and-mortar headquarters. Stone refers to his headquarters as “my BlackBerry,” however the company’s P.O. Box is based in Mount Kisco, where Stone resides.

“We’re doing something old-school with new methods,” said Stone. “We don’t even see each other sometimes.”

The company has about two-dozen people working across its four editions—half are staff members, half are freelancers, including: designers, editors, news and sports reporters, photographers, and administrative staff.

The free-paper business model is also a key to the company’s success, with the lack of postage costs and direct delivery as “a huge help,” according to Stone. Stone said penetrating the marketplace is less of a challenge when the paper is free, but of high quality.

“As a free newspaper, you quickly and automatically capture a good readership right out of the gate,” he said.

Since the company’s papers are distributed at local businesses, advertisers are actually the distribution point.

“So they anecdotally see the traffic that the paper generates,” he said.

Advertisers often base their decisions on the level of excitement and involvement they see from their own customers. Though “Main Street” advertisers are the company’s bread and butter, Stone said, larger advertisers are in the mix.

“I think now that we have four papers, we will have clients that want to buy into all four markets,” he said. “The more we grow, the more regional advertisers we’re able to attract.”

To start, the circulation will be about 6,000 for The White Plains Examiner alone. Across the four papers, circulation will be about 25,000, according to Stone.

The company bought about 20 newspaper boxes from Patricia Casey, the publisher of the White Plains Times—which stopped printing this past spring, and still maintains its website at WPTimes.com.

Casey serves as a consultant to Examiner Media, and will write for the new publication, as well as help with advertising sales and special projects. She’s working on special sections, with new sales people and writers—as well as developing a new magazine that will be published by her own company, Urban Village Publishing.

Tentatively titled The Conscious Examiner, the monthly magazine will focus on people and businesses that are creatively addressing environmental and economic issues. Casey hopes to follow the market “where the community heart is,” as opposed to simply where the money is by focusing on “forward-looking, new ideas.”

Casey’s magazine and the Examiner papers will co-promote one another, and present opportunities for advertisers to buy space across the publications.

The White Plains Times website will eventually change to move with the magazine, and discussions are underway for possibly creating a Web portal with other entities, Casey said.

The Examiner Media maintains a website, at TheExaminerNews.com, which covers all four papers. A White Plains tab is already on the site, where full PDFs of issues are posted a week after the print issue comes out.

Though in many ways he’s an expert on modern publishing—Stone admitted that he’s feeling his way, as far as best business practices and the decisions that go into running the papers.

“Like all of 21st Century publishing for all of us, it’s a work in progress,” he said.

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