

IN & AROUND TOWN

Adam Stone

Publisher with a Vision and a Sense of Humor

BY MICHALL JEFFERS

Adam Stone takes his work seriously, but not himself. Asked what makes his newspaper, “The Examiner,” so successful, he smiles, “I have no special talent; I surround myself with really good people.” Keeping up morale is more important than feeding his own ego, too. When a dreadful photo of Stone appeared in the blog of a competitor, he himself forwarded it to all his employees, knowing they’d get a good laugh. “And I still get the occasional ribbing about it.” Many of the people who work for the paper are friends, and teasing the boss is definitely OK.

Andy Jacobs



The result is a superior free newspaper, printed on good quality paper, with clear color photos. Why give away such a chic looking product? “I think it’s important for people to have something they can pick up in a diner, to read over coffee. You can see your neighbor mentioned, have a chance to complain, and even write a letter to the editor. Offering this opportunity is a great motivating factor to me, and enormously rewarding.”

While Stone is now the publisher of three newspapers, “The Examiner,” “The Putnam Examiner,” and “The Yorktown Examiner,” he started out as a hotshot reporter. He first met Hillary Clinton at a press conference in Ossining. The now Secretary of State was supporting a local candidate, and Stone was anxious to test her mettle. “I asked her some very tough questions about recent events in the community; I expected her to give vague, general answers. Instead, she was extremely well prepared for us, and knocked it out of the park!” Stone delights in the memory.

In fact, respect for journalism is at the heart of every Stone endeavor. His professors at Hofstra were old school, and instilled in him the virtues of writing for the printed page. Later, when he found vibrant Westchester communities which were being only minimally covered in the press, he seized the opportunity to bring his vision to life. “I’ve had labor pains with the papers, every one of them. But it’s important to remember that there’s a need for watchdogs. Municipal and county government, school boards, local events must be covered; it’s essential to our democracy. There’s a certain scrapbook validity about being permanent, being in print. We can appreciate and cherish much more what we can actually hold in our hands and read.”

This also explains why Stone has made the decision not to go online. “We feel it would dilute what we’re doing, take focus away from our jobs and our budget at the newspaper. What’s on the web must be constantly changing, and the question becomes, ‘What’s a weekly story, versus a daily story?’ The web reframes the news. We concentrate only on deciding what should appear in the newspaper; we feel this is part of why we’ve been successful.”

Stone also shares that he’s never had a Great Plan, and he doesn’t make grand projections into the future. He’s a great believer in serendipity, in meeting the right people at the right time, and in being willing to take chances. It’s important to take advantage of opportunities, especially since “Publishing has changed so much. When I got out of Journalism school, I was sure I’d get a job. Now, there are fewer journalism jobs every day. I got hundreds of replies to an ad I ran about needing staff. People applied from all over the country, and even from England. These were not beginners, but professionals who just needed a chance to work in their field.”

For those who are just starting out, Stone passes along some tips. “When you’re writing, don’t empty your notebook. Formulate the story in your mind; then, just go back to your notes to get accurate quotes. You must be ready to edit your work, even when you feel everything you’ve written is too precious to be cut.”

And most of all, “The money isn’t that great, the work is hard, and the hours are long. You have to love what you’re doing, or there’s no point.” And with that, Adam Stone takes his leave, eager to get back to work.

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