

11-year-old schoolboy edits his own paper

By REBECCA ROSENBERG
MONTREAL — An 11-year-old schoolboy, Dov Charney, has taken the role of a newspaper editor. He has launched his 11-year-old newspaper, 'What's Up,' in the suburban Westmont area at 20 cents a copy, currently has a circulation of about 500.



Dov Charney, 11, publishes his own newspaper which he distributes in the Westmont area.

He is in charge of the paper's layout, soliciting advertising and arranging for printing and distribution. The paper contains the usual news items, puzzles, mazes, and games one would expect in a children's newspaper, but the content of the articles is as relevant to adults as to Dov's peers, reflecting a kid's-eye view of that wonderful but often curious world out there.

11 Year-Old

Schoolboy Edits His Own Paper

The Canadian Jewish News
By Rebecca Rosenberg

Montreal — At first glance, Dov Charney does not look like a newspaper editor. He looks more like an 11 year-old schoolboy.

In fact, he is both and Dov's newspaper, What's Up, sold in the suburban Westmont area at 20 cents a copy, currently has a circulation of about 500.

Dov started his newspaper a year ago and he has since put out eight issues. The response from both adults and children was enthusiastic from the outset, with people phoning to request additional copies and subscriptions. The paper contains the crosswords, mazes, puzzles and games one would expect in a children's newspaper, but the content of the articles is as relevant to adults as to Dov's peers, reflecting a kid's-eye view of that wonderful but often curious world out there.

In an article entitled "Sorry Kids, For Adults Only," Dov comments on the puzzling phenomenon of the Halifax showing of The Muppet Movie, restricted to persons over 16.

"When the Ice Follies come to town, will it be restricted because the Muppets will be on?" Dov asks as he considers the inevitable consequence of such irrational censorship.

In addition to restaurant and movie reviews, the grade five, student tackles subjects which, though relevant to children, are often thought too serious for them — racial discrimination, child molesting, inflation and consumer information.

"We try to make it as lively as possible, covering a variety of topics that do not appear in other newspapers and to which children are seldom exposed," Dov says.

A number of his friends and schoolmates provide articles but Dov is the guiding spirit, contributing most of the articles as well as handling layout, soliciting advertising and arranging for printing and distribution.

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Dov attends Fine Arts Core Elementary, a progressive school emphasizing fine arts. Much of the material is drawn from personal experience or from interviews. Dov and his staff "usually cover things that happen to us or around us. Someone on our staff was molested and we got the story first-hand. "It's important for kids to know that these things can happen. If they become aware of it, they can learn to be more careful." Dov has come a long way in the past year from the first story he chased down. On the trail of that story, Dov went to Westmont city hall to get some information from the police department. "They refused to give it to me because I was a kid," he recalls.

While there, Dov heard about a city council meeting called to discuss the budget and decided to attend. The mayor gave him a press seat and from then on, he was hooked.

Evenings after school and weekends are spent hunched over a typewriter bashing out articles or doing layout and artwork for the paper. The work is painstaking and Dov is a perfectionist.

The response from the adult world has been generally supportive but there are exceptions. Canvassing his Westmont neighborhood, Dov has been surprisingly successful

generating advertising. On occasion, however, advertisers have taken advantage of his youth.

"After contracting for an ad to appear in three consecutive issues, one advertiser would not pay up. In another case, the check bounced."

As with all newspapers, Dov is supported heavily by advertising revenue and he is showing a growing concern with professionalism of presentation. "If it doesn't look good, you don't get and ad," he observes.

Once content to type his newspaper on an antiquated typewriter, he now has his issues typeset professionally. Sylvia Safdie Charney, Dov's mother, is a noted Montreal artist who encourages her children to express their own creativity. She commented that Dov's work on the paper has made him much more aware of the environment.

He is an avid news devotee, reading the newspaper daily and delaying the family's supper until he has viewed the televised evening news.

"Dov gets into areas of which a boy his age might not normally be aware and once he gets involved and interested, he tries to unravel and understand the implications," Mrs. Charney said.

"While a teachers strike was on, Dov worked on his paper for two weeks straight and I feel he continued to learn, develop and make valuable use of his time," she said.

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