

Newspaper ignores politics, prints only good news

By Wendy Fisher
Emerald Contributor

'Just Good News' looks for upbeat story angles

Wouldn't it be nice to have a newspaper with no religion or politics that prints just good news?

That idea popped into Lucky Colehour's mind three months ago as he sat fishing on a riverbank.

But Colehour didn't stop there. He started his own newspaper based on that idea and titled it *Just Good News*.

The newspaper is printed bi-weekly, and its third free issue will hit area businesses and the University Dec. 15.

In a front-page article of the second edition of *Just Good News*, Colehour explained why he created the newspaper.

"It's time for the Pollyannas to be heard, it's time for the rose-colored glasses to tint the world, it's time to return to the optimism that made this country what it is!" Colehour wrote. "Our media should be reporting the good things instead of the sensationally bad."

In the early 1980s, Colehour ran a cable television program, based in San Diego, called *Good News*.

"We reported the news — the good news, the uplifting, inspiring items that never make the front page, but should," he wrote. "I received hundreds of beautiful letters from all over the world, and I loved doing that show."

Colehour later sold his portion of the program and moved to Oregon to escape the pollution and overcrowding of San Diego.

Colehour defined a *Just Good News* story as anything uplifting with no sex, drugs, violence, religion or politics. He said his message to readers is, "Don't take anything too seriously."

The newspaper itself is relatively simple. The second edition was four pages long. The print in *Just Good News* is larger than most newspaper print, and along the bottom of the paper is printed, "FOR ENTERTAINMENT ONLY. Please Pass Me Along to a Friend and Make Their Day."

The stories in the Lane County edition ranged from introducing the Grand Theatre in Sutherlin, to a new family entertainment center in Roseburg, to local Frisbee golf organizations.

Journalism professor Carol Smith said *Just Good News* is not a new newspaper formula. It is a community newspaper, which is the "lowest rung" of journalism. The papers have always been around as bulletin boards for little towns. Smith said, adding that the only difference is *Just Good News* has a good-news spin.

A sentence taken from a front-page story of the paper reflects that community style: "Vern and Phyllis own and operate the Mini-Mart Cookie Thrift store on Stephens across from John Deere."

Smith said the newspaper "is an interesting concept but not well executed at present," and that right now it has novelty

going for it, which will get advertisers, but the editorial quality is bad.

But, she added, "you've got to hand it to anybody who starts their own paper. It takes guts."

Guts and \$13,000, that is. The cost of each edition of *Just Good News* costs Colehour more than \$6,000. He sold \$9,000 in advertising but ended up losing \$4,000 of his own money in the venture.

Colehour said he lost most of his advertisers for the third issue and could not afford to print it by its Nov. 15 deadline. He expects to find enough advertising to pay part of the bill by the Dec. 15 deadline.

Colehour's technique for starting *Just Good News* was to hire people who had the equipment he needed to run his newspaper. He hired a secretarial service to type the stories on computers, paid \$15 an hour to have the newspaper typeset and sent it to Springfield News Publishing for printing.

Just Good News' staff includes 130 freelance writers in Lane and Douglas counties and three permanent staff members, although Colehour said he needs more writers to cover the Eugene area.

Colehour and a few others distributed the first 20,000 issues throughout Lane and Douglas counties. The second issue's circulation was 40,000, and Colehour said he plans to increase the third issue's circulation to 60,000, and eventually

stabilize circulation at 80,000 copies.

Colehour's goal is to open *Just Good News* in two or three new cities a month. He said he plans to open the newspaper in Dallas, Tex. and San Diego, Calif. next month. Colehour believes once the newspaper goes national the advertising will pay off.

Colehour said he eventually wants to match *USA Today's* circulation of more than one

million readers, but he said so far money is an obstacle in reaching that goal.

In his next issues, Colehour plans to change his format to include news more specific to Lane County in the Lane County edition. He said he also wants to subscribe to the Associated Press wire service, printing only its good news.

Colehour also plans to bring in columnists on wine, cooking, gardening, modern technology and medicine, and to re-introduce his un-obituary (alive and well) section.



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RESERVISTS

Continued from Page 5

like that go and make these offenses, it's scary to think we would appease him," Fuller said. "And while I don't agree that America should fully take the burden, ... I think the potential for greater conflict is there."

Despite his misgivings, Harris said he will fulfill his obligation to the reserves.

"If I refuse to go, they would just call up someone else who wouldn't otherwise be sent," he said.

"Also, as a non-commissioned officer I feel some responsibility to those under me, to watch out for them and to bring them back in one piece if we are sent to the gulf."

In addition to packing their gear and saying good-byes, Fuller and Harris have crammed finals and papers into the last days before they leave in hopes of earning some academic credit in a term that was almost over by the time they were called up.

The University, in accordance with policies provided by the state board of higher educa-

tion, permits students in the military reserves who are called to duty the option of withdraw-

Turn to RESERVISTS, Page 13

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