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Published January 7th, 2009

LW Staff Celebrates Milestone and Its Editor

By Jennifer Wake



Lamorinda Weekly Editor Lee Borrowman with her son Shayan and daughter Ava Photo Andy Scheck

This week's paper is Lamorinda Weekly's 50th issue and 1,000th page published - a milestone, certainly. It is also the 1,000th page edited - an achievement that did not come without much sacrifice and at the hand of a talented individual we in "the biz" call Editor.

Our editor's name? Lee Borrowman.

Without Lee, (as well as the Schecks, of course), the paper you read every other week would likely look much different, or quite simply, may not even exist. Near the paper's inception, Lee made sure to guide us in the right direction when it came to content and overall vision, would stay up into the wee hours of the night making final edits before going to press, and would even write the majority of the stories as we built up our staff - all while continuing her full-time job.

Lee encompasses what every great editor should: she is magnanimous, patient, knowledgeable, and is a great writer. A superhero, in some respects, at least to us staffers.

Staff writer Andrea Firth describes Lee as someone who is "never afraid to tackle the tough story."

"She remains cognizant of the value of the news content and steers clear of stories that aim only to shock. She is exceedingly fair and won't let a story slide without both sides being told," Firth says. "While she is adventurous and loves stories that make us laugh, she is sensitive to the fact that we live in the

community that we report on and write about, and she deftly helps us to strike the right balance."

Never applying a heavy hand and always ready with her sense of humor, Lee has kept the Lamorinda Weekly team of writers a happy bunch.

"She knows how to charmingly elicit the writer to produce the best story possible," says staff writer Cathy Tyson. "I recently received this e-mail commenting on a story I was working on with a colleague:

'Not complaining, would throw myself in front of a speeding Humvee for either of you, but this really needs clarification!'

She was right - it did, so I pawned off the adjustment on my colleague."

Sophie Braccini, a "non-native English speaker," says she gave Lee a lot of editorial work.

"Lee claims that now it takes her only a few minutes to review my prose, but if I have indeed improved, I owe it to her patience and guidance," Braccini says. "Lee exhibits the mane of a lion but remains a soft spoken diplomat. Of course there have been challenging moments, like when she refused an editorial I had written: 'We do not publish our opinions,' she said. "Our paper stays neutral and that's what people like about it.' . . . And there are all those wacky article ideas I come up with."

"She is sometimes a hard sale, but is always open-minded and ready to encourage and improve on ideas as they are thrown around," explains Braccini. "She empowers and inspires us to give our best. Every other week, Lee spends days, including the weekend to review, improve and put together, with Andy and Wendy Scheck, the Lamorinda Weekly."

"Dealing with deadlines, juggling her kids' school schedules to attend editorial meetings, and giving up every other weekend to work late into the night is not everyone's idea of a good time," Tyson adds. "But despite the challenges, she remains ever steadfast in what is appropriate for the paper and deciphering the occasional gray area between news, opinion and advertising."

Writer Jean Follmer finds it particularly rewarding to hear the many positive comments about the paper each week, and is grateful to Lee for bringing the paper this far.

"She is so reliable, responsive, helpful, and honest. I know it wouldn't have been possible to reach this milestone so easily without Lee at the wheel," she says. "She is tremendously valued by all of us and her efforts are clearly paying off."

From all of us at Lamorinda Weekly, the photographers, the reporters, the interns and everyone in between, we thank you, Lee. You are truly the best.

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