

Cariboo Press opens the Prince George Free Press

By SHANE MILLS

Prince George Free Press

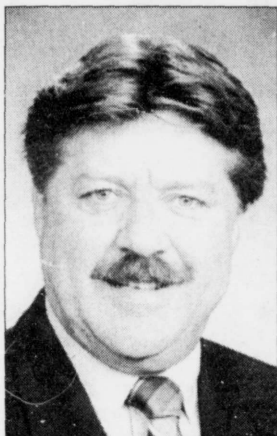
With the opening of the Prince George Free Press, Cariboo Press continues to expand the scope of its operations.

"In terms of number of units, we're the largest privately-owned newspaper chain in Canada," says Bob Grainger, president of Cariboo Press.

The company was founded in 1975 by David Black, who bought the Williams Lake Tribune from his father. Mr. Black, who has an engineering degree from UBC and an MBA from the University of Western Ontario, slowly began to build the company and today Cariboo Press boasts over 400 full-time employees.

The Cariboo Press has 25 operating divisions and stretches from Kelowna to Terrace, from Sicamous to Smithers. As well, Cariboo Press has two sister companies: Island Publishers and Sound Publications. Mr. Grainger notes Island Publishers is about the same size, while Seattle-based Sound Publications is slightly smaller. The president of each company is also an investor.

The rapid growth of Cariboo Press is quite simple, says Mr. Grainger. "We realized shortly after we bought the Tribune that there was a great possibility that by having a central printing plant we could minimize cost and create efficient-



Grainger: Hands off the editorial content of the paper

cies." As well, Cariboo Press has a policy of not interfering with the editorial content of the papers it publishes. "We don't interfere or direct editorial policy out of head office," says Mr. Grainger. "Without exception, every paper Cariboo Press has bought or started has maintained or improved the reflection of the publication on its community."

In terms of moving into the Prince George, Mr. Grainger says the time is now right.

Noting this city is probably the only one in Canada without a weekly newspaper, Mr. Grainger says Cariboo Press "wouldn't be in Prince George if we didn't think it was profitable."



McKenzie: Over 25 years in the newspaper business

And Mr. Grainger notes having someone qualified as Bob McKenzie, as publisher, made the decision a lot easier. "We're taking on another challenge and investing in our product."

Aside from serving as publisher, Mr. McKenzie is also a partner in The Free Press. With over 25 years experience with the Thomson Newspaper Group, Mr. McKenzie has worked from Victoria to St. John's. His last position with Thomson was as group publisher for the Okanagan Valley newspapers.

Mr. Grainger says Cariboo Press, with papers in all the surrounding markets, is quite familiar with Prince George. "We understand it and have a good relationship with the merchants."

He also notes The Free Press is not out to close the competition. "We think there's enough room there for both us."

Ramsey wants to protect kids

Declaring childhood injuries preventable, Health Minister Paul Ramsey announced a new advertising campaign to stop the injuries.

Statistics show that unintentional injuries are the single leading cause of death for children in British Columbia. Each year more 9,000 children are hospitalized because of preventable accidents, and over 150 are killed.

As a response, the Ministry of Health has unveiled the new PreventionCare television message aimed at reducing the number of injuries to children. The idea is that a small amount of added care and attention can avoid harmful situations.

The setting for the spot is a hospital emergency room, where a nurse talks about the nature of household injuries that have been brought in for medical attention. The nurse shows how easily many of the mishaps could have been avoided.

In addition to the commercial, the Ministry of Health is also distributing a multi-language injury prevention resource package, which was prepared by the Safe Start program at B.C.'s Children's Hospital in Vancouver.

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Robber pulls trick on Mr. G's by demanding cash on Halloween

On Halloween night at around 11:30 pm, Prince George RCMP say an unidentified female subject entered the Mr. G's convenience store located at 1667 Spruce Street.

The female, wearing a Halloween mask, pulled out what is believed to have been a plastic handgun, and demanded cash.

Police searched for the culprit but were unsuccessful.

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