

Local guy makes good: From Winnipeg to the World

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August 13, 2017

Franchise Life

He doesn't have a name—he's just the *Coffee News* Guy—but you know him. His cheerful, waving self is in the front of the crowd at the top of every edition of every *Coffee News*, no matter the city, country, or language. He looks good in tan. He's usually hidden someplace else on the front or back, too, and if you find him, you might win some tickets, or a gift basket, or a free oil change. At a trade show or a conference, if you find a *Coffee News* booth, you'll be greeted by a 5'6" "life size" cut out of the *Coffee News* Guy. At other times, he's standing in front of *Coffee News* home office in Bangor, Maine (US), where he presides over the largest franchise publication in the world.



The *Coffee News* Guy was born in the Winnipeg, Manitoba (Canada), a neighborhood of St. Vital, on October 22, 1988. That's the day *Coffee News* founder Jean Daum published her first small, local edition from her home typesetter.

Many years ago, when *Coffee News* owner Bill Buckley lived on a Bangor street called Laurel Circle, a ten-year-old boy named Robby lived next door. "He was a good kid, a neat dresser," Bill said. His father was a music teacher and they were very strict with Robby.

"So I came home one afternoon, and there was Robby, standing at that imaginary line between our properties, and not walking on Mr. Buckley's lawn. 'How're you doing, Robby?'

"'Oh great, Mr. Buckley,' he said. 'Well, I was wondering if I could ask you if you would autograph a *Coffee News* for me.'

"'Absolutely. I'd be thrilled,' I said. I take out *Coffee News*, put it on the hood of my car, and sign it to Robby, 'Best of luck in your studies.' Then I say, 'Can I ask you a question, Robby? Why do you want my autograph?'

"'Robby says, 'In my class, I tell all the kids that I live next door to the *Coffee News* man and they don't believe me.' So he wanted my autograph to show them it was true."

The cartoon version of the *Coffee News* Guy represents what *Coffee News* always has been about: he's cheerful, he's friendly, he's funny. He offers a break from the rest of this complicated life and its difficult personal and public news, giving readers the brief distraction of interesting tidbits, quotes, jokes, and uplifting predictions about their own lives.

Next to the nameplate on every single copy of *Coffee News*, the *Coffee News* Guy stands in front of a happy crowd. At 29, he's on the young side of our international family of publishers. Whether they're in their 30s or their 60s, most joined *Coffee News* because they wanted to shift gears for their families, or as the capstone of a career that provided income but was personally draining. They like the flexibility and control that *Coffee News* provides. They can work with spouses and friends, be available for their kids or their aging parents, and—once a franchise is up and running—make a point of regularly scheduled time for themselves.

The *Coffee News* Guy knows all this. That's why he's smiling and waving. Welcome to the family. Enjoy.