

Ken White, critic at large, puts anchors to the test

By Richard Crow
YELLIN' REBEL

Ken White, media critic for the Review Journal, is a man on a mission, which is to watch and then judge the local media celebrities and tell them just how fallible they are.

Wearing a sly grin all the while, armed with his trusty VCR, he records each week's newscasts and then watches seven to eight hours of video tape to get enough material for one weekly column about each station's attempt to give Las Vegas the news.

Basically, what he does is view each news program as an entertainment program because that is essentially what they are.

He said, "Just like the newspaper is interested in circulation, they [television stations] are interested in ratings."

"My basic angle when looking at a news program is how well they perform and do they goof up," White said, "I don't follow a lot of the critics who believe it isn't news at the same time, but there is a big dose of entertainment also."

One thing that he sees wrong with all the local news shows is they all have the same format: man/woman anchor with the blow-dried look, a silly weatherman, and an overexcited sportscaster.

If he had his way with a newscast he would get rid of the weatherman and not use as much video of car accidents, fires, and the like, because when they cover these they do not cover other events that affect people.

White stated, "A little more depth would certainly help."

Channel 8 has the best news because they put a lot of effort and resource into their program and they tend to cover major stories very well, White concluded.

As for the worst, he said Chan-

nel 3 is not very good. "They don't fit my idea of what a newscast should be. They pretend to be the friendly newscast. They want you to tune in because you like them...they go for the fun stuff to much."

Channel 13 just has a problem with identity. "They really do not know where they are at," he said.

As for the best anchors, he thinks Gary Waddell and Mary Ruth Carlton are pretty good because they come across very straightforward, although they do tend to trip up once in a while.

He added that Dave Courvoisier is also pretty good and without him Channel 3's ratings would probably drop tremendously.

Overall, Ken White is a man who enjoys his job. He gets to write about what he wants; however his editor does suggest things now and then and is squeamish about using four-letter words.

"This is really the first job I've had in journalism where I can write the way I want to and approach things the way I want to," he said with a grin.

He stressed that when he criticizes the news it is done with a sense of humor.

"I never set out to draw blood from anyone I've written about...I don't take myself that serious," White said.

To some, he conceded, his

think his column is so funny.

Courvoisier, news anchor, said he wonders why White thinks he always has to be critical.

He said that White keeps a very adversarial point of view and doesn't give credit where credit is due.

White is not is. He said the only thing White has done to him (Britton) is bring him more attention.

"He won't even be a footnote in my career. He's not too bright and his opinions aren't even in the minority," Britton concluded.

White, 32, was born and raised in Kansas City, Kansas. He came to Las Vegas 16 years ago in 1972. He attended Western High School and then UNLV.

He said his education was most informal studying and reading on his own.

He is engaged to be married in December to Kermie Robinson, whom he met in a film production.

White started his journalism career with the old Valley Times newspaper in 1978 as a movie critic but quickly moved up to assistant sports editor and then sports editor.

After the closing of the Valley Times in 1984, he moved to the Henderson paper for a year and a half as a photographer and part-time sportswriter and then joined Bob Stupak at the newly formed Bullet newspaper which he said, "was kind of crazy."

Despite the atmosphere or maybe because of it, White said he liked it there because of the freedom he had in writing his own column. The Bullet went through several editors in the eight months he was there. One of them was Mark Shipper, to whom he gives credit for the idea of the local media critic. Some writers at the Bullet did not like the idea, but White and Shipper did, and the media critic was born.

Soon after, the RJ picked up on his media columns and asked if he would like his own column with them. He accepted their offer.

He said that his qualifications for the job include 11 years in journalism and a built-in flak detector, something every critic should have.

FIGHTING FOR GOOD MEDIA



photo by Steve Spatafore

MEDIA CRITIC - Las Vegas Review Journal media critic Ken White is a controversial figure with his reviews of TV shows and local TV news anchors.

humor might seem dry or aggressive and it's not always flattering, which explains some of the calls and letters he receives. It's the kind of humor he grew up using to get back at the kids who bothered him in school.

Dave Courvoisier and Rich Britton of Channel 3 news are a good example of those who don't

hammer someone like (he does) in this town."

Britton wonders where White gets his motivation. He doesn't think White is motivated by his own interest and wonders where he gets paid.

Britton also says he has a good sense of humor too, but Las Vegas could use a legitimate critic and

AIM HIGH COLLEGE STUDENTS MAJORING IN Health Professions

Discover a challenging, rewarding future that puts you in touch with your skills. Today's Air Force offers ongoing opportunities for professional development with great pay and benefits, normal working hours, complete medical and dental care, and 30 days vacation with pay per year. Learn how to qualify as an Air Force health professional. Call

USAF HEALTH PROFESSIONS COLLECT
714-888-5485

AIR FORCE

Alternative ROCK!

Bang.
Ouch.

KUNV 91FM
COMMUNITY RADIO

The Rock Avenue, daily 8pm to 10am

Crisis Pregnancy Center

Pregnancy Tests and Counseling
24 HOUR HOTLINE (702) 366-1247
All Services Free and Confidential

721 E. Charleston Blvd. • Suite 6 • Las Vegas, NV 89104

If you don't wear a seat belt, a fine might not be the highest price you'll pay.

1-800-334-7477