



Birth of a Student Newspaper

When fifth graders heard in early March that there would be a student newspaper at Janney, they eagerly filled out job application forms.

"I have always wanted to be a journalist and I love writing," one applicant wrote.

"I love to find things out," another student said. "It's good to correct wrongs."

"I criticize everything," wrote a would-be reviewer. "Not only bad things, but good things, too."

The idea for a student-run newspaper at Janney came from Aaron Epstein, a retired journalist and longtime volunteer tutor at the school.

"I believe it would be a valuable educational experience for the fifth graders on the news staff, and would enhance Janney's already excellent reputation," Mr. Epstein wrote to Counselor/Social Worker Maureen Leventhal and Principal Norah Lycknell.

They enthusiastically agreed.

That was the beginning of the only student newspaper at the elementary school level in the District of Columbia.

With help from fifth-grade teachers, Mr. Epstein chose an initial newspaper staff of 15. The selected students met weekly during their lunch recess. They named the paper *The Jaguar Journal*, compiled a list of story ideas, and volunteered to report, write, take photographs, draw cartoons and help with the editing.

In one session, Mr. Epstein taught the fundamentals of newspaper writing, stressed the importance of deadlines, and wrote on a whiteboard in large letters, what may become the motto of *The Jaguar Journal*: **FIRST COMMANDMENT: THOU SHALT NOT BORE THE READER.**

Nine fourth graders were named as interns. They are being trained to run *The Journal* next fall. One of them is slated to become the newspaper's first business manager.

His job: To seek sources of revenue. It costs money to publish *The Journal* and Janney has a limited budget. If you want to contribute money or buy an ad, please write to thejaguarjournal@gmail.com.

THE JAGUAR JOURNAL

Member of the National Elementary School Press Association

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