

Tell me your stories

EDITORIAL

I make my return to the Greater Toronto Area after three years in two provinces.

Working as a reporter, photographer and weekend editor previously, I'm excited to take the helm of the Caledon Citizen.

My first gig was 3,000 kilometres away in Melfort, Sask. I saw differences in landscapes and scenery spending three days on the road. Surrounded in a metropolis my whole life, it was odd seeing the flat prairies with no buildings in sight. Sometimes I would see a combine or swather on the highway. Other times I would see a tumble weed dancing across the road. To no surprise, living in Saskatchewan came as a giant culture shock.

A small city of about 6,000 people just an hour and a half north-west of Saskatoon, Melfort is known as the city of Northern Lights. It is said residents can frequently catch a glimpse of the aurora borealis, especially during the cold winter months.

Melfort gave me the chance to hone my craft. I focused on covering city council meetings, agricultural events, court cases and human-interest stories. I occasionally covered the Melfort Mustangs, the city's Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League (SJHL) team. Living and working in Melfort was a great experience. I made me further understand the importance of community journalism, especially in a small town. If I had to choose one story I was most proud of there, it would be covering the grand opening of North East Outreach and Support Services (NEOSS), an emergency domestic violence shelter.

I believe everyone should experience living in a small town. A life there gave me the chance to understand issues people care about while seeing the community celebrate their local athletes. Despite the stores closing at 6 p.m. and the movie theatre only showing two movies a week, I reflect on my time there as a worthwhile and enjoyable tenure. I made two great friends who I still keep in touch to this day. One thing I won't miss is the harsh -40C winter weather. If you forget to plug your car's block heater at night, good luck trying to get anywhere the next day.

After Melfort I spent time in Moose Jaw, Sask. A historical city of 30,000, Moose Jaw is 400 kilometres south of Melfort. It is also 70 kilometres away on the Trans-Canada Highway from the province's capital, Regina.

Moose Jaw is known for snowbirds dashing across the sky and the Tunnels of Moose Jaw. This exhibit takes you under the city where tourists learning the history of mobster Al Capone prior to his 1931 conviction of tax evasion. It is said he would bootleg booze through the pathways.

In Moose Jaw I worked at the Times-Herald, a daily newspaper that was founded in 1889. There, I reported on concerts, provincial politics, Indigenous stories and LGBTQ issues. I was part of a new crew who worked hard to change the face of the newspaper in the community, but unfortunately my time there was short as the publication folded.

After Moose Jaw, I ventured out to Grande Prairie, Alta. A city north-west of Alberta with a population of about 63,000, Grande Prairie is 450 kilometres from Edmonton near British Columbia.

Grande Prairie is a booming city with a rich oil sector, I worked at the Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune (DHT) where I spent time covering concerts at Revolution Place, interviewed Premier Rachel Notley and attended events at Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) or at the Eastlink Centre.

After my time in Grande Prairie, I had the chance to return to Ontario, up north in Timmins. Seven hours away, Timmins continues to have a strong mining industry. It also has a rich francophone population.

In Timmins I covered an array of events, such as the weeklong Stars and Thunder concert series and events from the French community centre, Le Centre culturel La Ronde.

This leads to me here today. As editor of the Citizen, I have no intentions of leaving any time soon.

I want to understand the heart of the community. I want to see what residents are passionate about and hear the stories you care about. I want to continue the tradition of the Citizen while putting my mark on the paper.

Before coming here, I heard tremendous stories of my predecessor, Bill Rea. I know I can never replace Mr. Rea nor do I plan to. My one hope is that I continue the work he began, respect the publication and create a newspaper that reflects the town and its people.

If you have any questions or would like to chat, drop by the office any time. I hope to cover the stories you care about and the ones you need to know. - Joshua Santos, news editor.