

## Let's get the introductions out of the way

by ALYSSA PARKHILL

Before I dive into the hard-hitting world of reporting, I'd like to first share some information about myself and how I came to be a part of the Caledon Citizen team.

Growing up I learned to love literature at a young age. I struggled with the loss of a parent at the ripe age of 15 and needed somewhere to go to let myself be away from reality, even if for a little bit. I read more books than I can remember. I let myself be shipped away to the land of fiction and lived in someone else's shoes. That's where my love of words began.

I didn't read the newspaper, or really pay attention to any news until I hit about 20. In high school I had little interest in politics, community news, events; really anything going on around me. Stay with me, it gets better.

After high school, I waited a whole five years to finally enroll into college. I looked through several different career options that I thought I'd be good at, but couldn't decide on one I would actually enjoy. That's when I stumbled upon the Journalism program at Sheridan College in Oakville.

I wanted to write, tell stories and get paid for it! So, I applied and went for it, full force. And boy oh boy, I was not prepared.

It was hard! Yes, I know its post-secondary, but the amount of hands-on work that was involved was overwhelming. I was absolutely terrified when interviewing for a story. My hands would uncontrollably sweat while my heart felt like it was going to pound right out of my chest. I would smile, and project confidence hoping the person I was interviewing couldn't see me internally freaking out. But, I did it.

The fear eventually turned to adrenaline and excitement. The pure joy of finishing a story with interesting information and sources, and the knowledge that the community is reading my words, is like nothing I've ever felt before. I worked hard. I worked a full-time job while going to school full-time. I put my heart into my work and refused to fail.

By the time second year rolled around, school wasn't feeling like school anymore. I was the host for the Sheridan News broadcast show, while the next half of the year I wrote for the online school publication - the Sheridan Sun. The interactive work was extremely vital when learning about the pressure the real industry entails.

Nearing the end of the two-year program, I interned at the Borden Citizen, the newspaper at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Borden, where I currently reside with my fiancée who is serving. For 160 hours I experienced the industry first hand. The Borden Citizen gave me real life experience in terms of writing for a community. The military members and their spouses have built a strong knit community to help one another. I was welcomed with open arms.

I was born and raised in Mississauga, and moving to live in a small community in Borden was a drastic change for me. Growing up in the city never really gave me a strong sense of community but I can say that through my experience writing at the newspaper at CFB Borden, I've truly fallen in love with writing about, and for , a community.

Being a writer has always been my dream. Having the opportunity to tell people's stories is such a gift for not only myself, but for others as well. I don't know if I ever really dreamed of writing for a specific platform, I just know that it's what I love to do. The best part about journalism, is you can find it anywhere. Stories are all around us, begging to be told.

I strive to bring creative, exciting, fresh news each week for the Caledon audience, and want to thank you for having me.