

# My path to local journalism

by JOSHUA DRAKES

Good morning, afternoon, or evening to whoever might be reading this. I hope this little article finds you well.

I'm Joshua Drakes, and I'm the new reporter you might have noticed in the Shelburne Free Press and Orangeville Citizen. I'm the new Local Journalism Initiative reporter for Shelburne and the surrounding area.

It's been a couple of weeks since I started covering this small town, and I think we should get properly introduced.

I didn't originally plan to be a reporter. My high school life mostly revolved around running the drama club, playing in school orchestras, and generally being a nerd. English class was really the only time I took writing seriously.

That all promptly shifted when I got to Humber College in the fall of 2019. I tried to pursue a career in engineering.

To put it mildly, it did not go well.

Then COVID happened, and school shut down. That March of 2020 was when I looked around for alternatives that played to my strengths. Acting was too risky and not a very secure career, but then I saw journalism. I could put my writing to good use.

I actually managed to get a phone call with the program coordinator for the Journalism program at Humber College, and we talked about what I was looking for. She encouraged me to take journalism at the start of the next semester.

I did just that.

The next three years were a blur. I got to experience all the different avenues journalism has to offer. Print, magazines, radio, TV, everything there was to see. I loved doing all of it; each avenue had a new angle to challenge me to do better than last time.

It took me all three years to figure out which avenue I wanted to pursue, but by the end, only one truly captivated me despite all odds.

Newspaper reporting won out, in no small part due to the tough professors I had along the way. I credit most of my decision-making to Rob Lamberti, my old school reporter/ professor, who really hammered home the responsibility we have to reporting and what it means to be a journalist.

I didn't immediately jump into my career after graduation, as my family had just moved to Orangeville, so I instead sought a temporary retail job to hold me over.

After some time, I started writing for the Orangeville Citizen as a freelancer, covering stories here and there. It wasn't much, but it was a solid start. In the end, I must have been doing something right, because I was offered the full-time position I currently have. And now the rest is, as the saying goes, history.

So, about my focus.

I cover everything, to put it simply. That means I'll be covering community events like fundraisers, festivals, and the like, as well as town council meetings and some other political events around the town.

I've already done extensive coverage in Shelburne, including the Remembrance Day services earlier this month, local events like

volunteer fairs, and, of course, council meetings.

You might have seen some of those articles already, and I hope that I've done a good job so far. I look forward to continuing to serve Shelburne and bringing you as much info as I possibly can.

Should you have any story ideas you think might be newsworthy, feel free to reach me at [josh@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:josh@lpcmedia.ca) ? I'm always open to hearing from the community.

If you see me wandering around town, don't hesitate to introduce yourself. I'm always looking to meet new people from this beautiful community.

On a more personal note, all you really need to know about me is that I'm a nerd.

What that means is that I have hobbies in programming, voice acting, some online streaming, and costume making. None of these are professional, I must add, so I'm far from an authority.

I love movies, especially science fiction and fantasy. Star Wars and The Lord of the Rings are my bread and butter.

That's about it, really. Now you know a little bit more about me.

I hope you continue to enjoy the writing I produce for Shelburne.