

Farewell Halton Hills



Cynthia Gamble

This week, after 32 years, I will write -30- on my career at *The Independent & Free Press*. I am retiring as news editor, and as a weekly observer in the life of this community, on Friday.

I began at *The Independent & Free Press* as a painfully shy reporter on June 21, 1984. It seemed like I covered every event happening in town from accidents to T-ball. I was drawn to the softer side of news and quickly rid myself of the police beat and spent years on the education, entertainment and community events beats. For more than 17 years, I sat almost every Monday night watching town government operate as the council reporter.

On Friday, I will leave still a shy person who prefers to quietly work in the background but all the richer for this career as a community journalist.

Many times I have been asked why did I stay so long, even when I have had opportunities at other papers in larger cities? I stayed because I believed in community journalism. I believed that people should know what's happening in their own communities and where is the best place to get that knowledge via their local newspaper.

I stayed because who else would report on little girls cutting their hair to make their classmate with cancer feel better or little boys running a lemonade stand to raise money for a disease that their mom is suffering from.

I stayed because I thought it was important that the people knew their town taxes were going up or why the school board has to close a particular school or what is that new business that is opening on the corner.

I believe in journalism that year after year celebrates the community with stories on fall fairs, Santa Claus parades, Canada Day parties, and celebrates the people living in that community.

Donald Trump and the Kardashians may get all the headlines in this new world of infotainment but I'd rather write a boring headline that Town council approved a road repair. To me, that is a story that that really matters.

I stayed because I love this community of Halton Hills Acton and Georgetown and everywhere in between. I think the people living here are wonderful people who go above and beyond when someone is in need. This is a community of volunteers who bring richness to the small town quality of life here in almost every aspect.

I thank *The Independent & Free Press* readers for the goodwill they have shown me as I have grown from that painfully shy girl to a seasoned news editor.

I would like to thank *The IFP's* General Manager Steve Foreman, Regional Managing Editor Chris Vernon and Metroland for allowing me the opportunity to go at this time when I needed to go. It won't be easy for them or for my two remaining editorial colleagues, reporters Eamonn Maher and Kathryn Boyle. But my colleagues at *The IFP* in all the departments have and always will work together as a team with the single goal to put out the best community newspaper they can.

Please dear readers be patient as they cope with this latest change as the newspaper industry continues its spiraling transition. As long as there is a community, there will also be a strong future for your local community newspaper, *The Independent & Free Press*.

-30-

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