

THE FACES BEHIND THE BYLINES

National Newspaper Week is upon us. What better time to provide readers with information on your local journalists, who are committed - and connected - to the Halton community.

This special feature offers you - our readers - with a look at the faces behind the bylines for stories published in your community newspaper and online at www.insidehalton.com.

Veronica Appia is a reporter/photographer with the Georgetown Independent and Free Press. She has been working in the journalism realm for five years, first as a theatre critic, online editor and digital content producer, prior to tackling the news in Halton Hills. She is also the regional education reporter, covering the Halton District School Board for the Burlington Post, Milton Canadian Champion and Oakville Beaver. Veronica is a sucker for cheesy romance novels and a good live musical.

John Bkila is the city hall reporter for the Burlington Post. He also writes about political issues across Halton. He has



Veronica Appia



John Bkila

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OCTOBER 1-7, 2018

been working as a journalist for nine years. About 85 per cent of his knowledge of the world, history and social phenomena came from The Simpsons.

Herb Garbutt is a Halton-based reporter with previous spots in The Simpsons. Herb Garbutt Lindsay and Pembroke - with 26 years experience covering mostly sports and athletes in the community. He loves live music and has been to 15 concerts in the past eight months. Favourites include The Glorious Sons, Shinedown, The Offspring and Alice in Chains. He owns four guitars and zero musical talent. His pets include two 25-year-old turtles.

Alexandra Heck is a reporter with the IFP in Georgetown covering town hall and regional politics, health, crime and general assignments. She has five years experience reporting as a freelancer for the Orangeville Banner, as well as for Niagara This Week and



Herb Garbutt



Alexandra Heck

the Fernie Free Press. Alex loves running, watercolor painting and brewing kombucha.

David Lea is a Metroland Halton division reporter with 12 years' experience. He's a big fan of horror movies and The Walking Dead.

Steve LeBlanc is a news editor who has been working in the industry for the past 25 years. His all-consuming love of coffee has inspired him to write four poems about the soul-nourishing brew.

Kevin Nagel is a news editor with more than 39 years experience in the industry. He has spent all those years with Metroland (and Inland) in Burlington. When his wife delivered their healthy baby girl, Veronica, after 24 hours of labour, Kevin suffered from a migraine due to a lack of food and sleep. The doctor told his wife Kathy, "You and the baby are fine, but I don't know if your husband is going to make it."

Graham Paine is a vet-



David Lea



Steve LeBlanc



Kevin Nagel

eran photo-journalist who will soon mark 40 years in the business. He started in the industry well before digital technology, when newsrooms were outfitted with darkrooms. He was invited - and attended - a special reception on-board The Royal Yacht Britannia, where he got to mix and mingle with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.

Saira Peesker is a reporter who writes for the Burlington Post, Oakville Beaver and Milton Canadian Champion. She has been working in the industry for 14 years. She has played roller derby for a decade with the Toronto and Hamilton A-teams. As a result, she is currently



Graham Paine



Saira Peesker

on crutches recovering from knee surgery but dreams of a triumphant return to the track.

Julie Slack is a reporter who has worked in the industry for 29 years. Over the past 11 years, she has fostered more than 200 cats and kittens through a cat rescue. The number of feline fosters is almost equivalent to her collection of novelty socks.

Nikki Wesley has spent the better part of the last 11 years focusing her lens on the people and events that shape our communities. She started playing ice hockey last year and wishes she'd started 30 years ago.

Tim Whitnell has worked as a reporter



Julie Slack



Nikki Wesley



Tim Whitnell

for the last 32 years. While on assignment for the Burlington Post, he once took a chilly winter night-time flight in a police helicopter over Burlington and Hamilton. He also rode in the passenger seat of a race car around a track in Cayuga - without a working seatbelt. He didn't know that until he was about to get into the car. "I made the decision to take the ride anyway as I made the effort to get down there, and got a flat tire along the way. An omen? I just held on to a loose harness for dear life for about 10 minutes, especially going around the race track's sharp corners with the G force straining my arms."

Kathy Yanchus is a reporter with more than 30 years' experience. Over the course of her career, she has worked for four of Halton West division's five papers, including the Oakville Beaver, Burlington Post, Milton Canadian Champion and Flamborough Review.



Kathy Yanchus

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