

Ashley Blackford.

Florenceville-Bristol native Ashley Blackford spoke with Cloey Kinney, high school junior, offering insight into her job as a TV reporter. After graduating from Carleton North High School in 2007, she pursued a degree in journalism at Holland College, later joining the WAGM-TV crew in Presque Isle, Maine. Blackford says her job is always different, and that she “felt studying journalism would open up different possibilities for my future.” Specific to her job are many responsibilities, such as writing, editing, reporting, shooting, and creating her own stories. Despite the many responsibilities, Blackford says that “the benefit of this in my opinion is being able to be a part of the process from the beginning to end.”

Another question Kinney asked was when sitting down for the first time, how do you keep the interview going? Ashley Blackford says that she “wants it to be a conversation. I always go into an interview thinking about what the story is about and what information I need to tell it ... In the short time it takes me to set up my tripod and camera, I try to make the person feel comfortable. The majority of people do not like being on camera, so convincing people to talk to me can be difficult. In an interview it’s important to not just ask good questions, but also to listen ... No matter the topic, I love being able to sit down with someone and having them trust me to tell their story.”

In a 2011 National Household Survey, there were only 13 thousand journalists in Canada. Journalism isn’t a highly in demand job, but it is a fulfilling one. Blackford agreed with this unfortunate reality. “Social media has become a place where the majority of people get their news, which means less and less are reading newspapers, listening to the radio, and watching TV news.” Apps such as Facebook, twitter, messages, or unreliable online sources are diminishing the need and desire to tune into news stations. There is an issue in neglecting newspapers and actual news stations, however, something Blackford brought attention to. “I think it’s important people still turn to local media for their news, whether it be print or broadcast because of accuracy. Oftentimes false information gets spread online, therefore I think the traditional forms of media will continue to exist.”

Florenceville-Bristol thanks Ashley Blackford for taking time out of her day to educate and inform the public on what it’s like to be a journalist in 2020. We wish Ashley luck as she’s on maternity leave, and can’t wait to see her again on the television soon!