

More Bad News for Dreams of Solid Journalism

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Tuesday, July 06, 2010

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A little over a year ago, I wrote about [the importance of supporting and encouraging community papers](#), even in this electronic era with the [ascendance of ambient media](#).

But today we've seen another fail in the possibility of quality community journalism in BC with the announcement of another shakeout in community papers in BC. Black Press just bought out Glacier Media's 11 papers and they'll close the 4 that happen to compete with Black papers in Nelson, PR, 100 Mile and Quesnel.

The performance of its remaining publications should get stronger as the economy improves.

via [CBC News - Media - 4 B.C. newspapers shutting down](#).

I'd venture to say that the performance of Black's 4 papers that suddenly lose competition will get stronger very soon!

So what's the prognosis?

Ultimately, what I want is a vibrant free press. A group of media outlets that hold society and its leadership accountable.

Though I haven't caught up yet to this episode of *The Wire*, I enjoy that this is flying around Twitter right now: "You know what a healthy newsroom is? It's a magical place where people argue about everything all the time."

Where there is a monopoly, like the CanWest stranglehold soon to be weakened in Vancouver, there is less chance of effective journalism. And while competition also leads to bad journalism sometimes as everyone tries to be the first, or nearly the first, to report the death of Gordon Lightfoot while he happened to be getting his teeth cleaned, I'd rather see some healthy competition as the good outweighs the bad, at least in my universe.

But I also read today that The Canadian Press is going to [cease to be a non-profit cooperative purveyor of news](#) as 3 media groups are going to now run it as a for-profit business.

And I'm left with some real sadness about the potential for community political dialogue. When community papers now weigh less than the fliers in the middle, it's time to wonder if quality online outlets can go to press and put a paper in people's hands. Certainly a place like San Francisco is a geographically tight and politically vibrant enough community for [San Francisco Public Press to try creating a hardcopy edition](#).

In the end, I turn everyone once again to [George Monbiot's advice to aspiring writers](#): Choose Life! The 6 years of this site certainly wouldn't exist if it weren't for this fantastic perspective on writing, politics, integrity and improving society. I only hope we can live up to a solid ideal, an ideal that Monbiot wrote about even before the explosion of blog-platform journalism and editorialism.

Because I know it just got harder today in BC and Canada for all of us to enjoy the ideal of a quality press.