

THE QUEST FOR THE TRUTH AND THE IMPORTANCE OF JOURNALISM

We need journalism to inform and educate us on pathways toward a better future, writes Lyla Miklos.

By Lyla Miklos

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*Growing up, Lyla Miklos had dreams of being an investigative reporter like Lois Lane from "Superman."
(Photo Credit: Warner Bros)*

These are highlights from a recent speech Lyla Miklos gave to the Rotary Club of Hamilton.

Growing up I would dream of being an investigative reporter like Louis Lane from the Superman comics, exposing corruption and revealing hard truths. Enrolling in Mohawk College's Broadcast Journalism program after graduating from High School was a logical next step towards that goal.

Mohawk College announced earlier this year that they are suspending¹. their Journalism program because of the lack of jobs in the industry. As a Mohawk College Broadcast Journalism grad². this is soul crushing news. Journalism isn't just an industry; it provides the public with an essential service.

Since 2008 nearly 500 news media outlets in Canada have closed. These closures include local newspapers, urban weeklies, radio stations and television newsrooms.

Digital media which was free and available without a subscription ate away at their audience. The bigger problem was despite having all these different mediums with which to spread the news, for them to be maintained they had to be funded via Capitalist principles. There may have been more media outlets, but this didn't necessarily translate into more advertisers. Also, an organization whose goal is to promote the truth, will always be at odds with a funding formula based on a greed driven profit motive.

Canada's Bill C-18, The Online News Act³, ordered social media platforms to no longer steal Canadian media's content. Facebook's reaction to C-18 was to block Canadian users from sharing or reading any news content on their platform⁴.

This summer Torstar and Post Media were in talks to merge⁵. The merger fell apart. As a result, Torstar laid off over 600 people, thus shuttering 70 community newspapers⁶ across Ontario. The layoffs included 68 journalists.

I own a public relations business and I host a radio show on Mohawk College's campus radio station. I may know how to craft an effective press release, but with one news outlet after another shuttering there are fewer journalists for me to share my message with so the public will receive it. Mohawk College has suspended their journalism program, but if it is permanently shut down, what media studies program at the College will go next? Will they close their campus radio station? Will we lose yet another Canadian Broadcaster?

During my lifetime technology has evolved at lightning speed. Some communication platforms were created with noble intentions, but those with nefarious intent have corrupted them into vehicles to promote hate and white supremacy. Democratically elected governments were not paying attention to the rapidly changing world around them and now have fallen victim to digital tools run by corporations whose motives are suspect.

Journalism is a noble calling.

Brave journalists have put their lives at risk at while exposing the truth. Some losing their lives in that pursuit. From 2016 to 2020, UNESCO recorded 400 killings of journalists⁷. 90% of their murder cases remain unresolved. Journalist imprisonment is at record highs. Online violence and harassment lead to self-censorship and, sometimes, physical attacks.

Journalists have also increasingly been attacked while covering protests, by various actors, whether they be security forces or protest participants. During the Ottawa

Trucker Convoy Protest journalist friends shared their horror stories with me of being forced to removed network logos from their vehicles and microphones in order to avoid being physically attacked or violently harassed by protestors.

Journalism is crucial to a healthy democracy.

We need journalism to not only let us know that the world is going to hell. We need it to inform and educate us on pathways towards a better future.

In this dystopian artificial intelligence age riddled with misinformation George Orwell's words are ever more prescient, "In times of deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act."

Lyla Miklos is the Host of Centre Stage on INDI 101.5 FM, Owner of Lyla-The Publicist, Vocalist, Writer, Education Worker, Queer Activist and Trekkie. Visit the website <https://lylamiklos.com/>

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