

Producing Paltry Prospects For an Educated Populace

By Sidney Secular



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APPALLING PAUCITY OF NEWSPAPERS

A report from Northwestern University in an Associated Press article indicates that local newspapers in the US are dying at the rate of two per week. The report further says that there has been new growth in digital alternatives “but not enough to compensate for what has been lost”. Continuing with the data divulged in the said report, “areas of the country that find themselves with a reliable source of local news tend to have populations that are poorer and less educated than those covered well”. If you read between those lines, you realize that they are denigrating small town papers in comparison with those that are part of the mainstream media. The country had 6,377 newspapers at the end of May, 2022, down from 8,891 in 2005. Discounting any reckoning from the economic wreck known as the COVID pandemic, 360 papers have been shut down since the end of 2019, all but 24 of them weeklies serving small communities.

Many of the new digital news sites are focused only on single issues and are clustered in or are close to big cities. More to the point, they are limited to those “readers” who have the technological ability to reach them. Mostly older people who

are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with computers and other such devices will not or cannot "tune in" to these publications. "News deserts" are growing: some 70 million Americans live in a county with either only one or actually *no* local news organization. The author of the aforesaid report, one Penelope Abernathy, worries that what's at stake is our "democracy" and our "social and societal cohesion". True daily newspapers printed and distributed seven days a week are also dwindling. Forty of the largest national so-called newspapers (actually propaganda rags) publish only-digital versions at least once per week, and thus are not really newspapers in the usual sense.

"Inflation" is the big bugaboo for the switch away from printed editions. The continuing degradation of the postal service coupled with the increase in charge for its use is also a matter that affects those publications reaching their readership by mail. The fiscal allegation of inflation is a sort of obfuscation as it doesn't consider methodologies that could reduce costs such as alternative formats and smaller print that could squeeze more material on to a page, or use of cheaper paper. The report says with a "straight face" that another factor accompanying the declining number of papers is that the large newspaper chains have bought out hundreds of newspapers in small and mid-sized markets. It is readily apparent that these weren't bought out for just the hell of it, but to produce the newspaper in a more economical and profit-producing manner. Less than one-third of the country's 5,147 weeklies and just a dozen of the 150 large metro and regional dailies are locally owned and operated. It's also a fair question to ask whether the buyouts were to allow the big lefty mainstream media sources to increase their grip on what is published insuring that the "press" fully follows leftist viewpoints.

Let's further analyze what has been happening in order to elucidate what the aforesaid report is covering up or, in the

alternative, leaving out. The decline in numbers of newspapers is most prominent in the poorer, older and less educated areas per said report. These would be the “whiter” areas in flyover country and in the South where the economy has tanked more than elsewhere and where people are starting to move towards greener pastures. As a result, there will be fewer and fewer people to read these papers as time goes on. Less subscribers create an attrition of papers and that results in newspapers folding. The “natives” in these mostly “red” areas are also turned off by the trash and leftist tripe their papers are probably publishing in increasing amounts, tripe that don't reflect their values. All so-called journalists nowadays go to the same leftist academic schools to imbibe the leftist propaganda and talking points as they learn their trade. Some will return to their generally conservative oriented areas they grew up in to spread their newfound philosophies – thus the papers gradually turn “blue.” Many of these papers will have editorials and especially op-eds by prominent RINOs and neo-cons of the George Will variety whose balderdash and bald-faced lies turn off the locals to their papers.

The residents of the more rural and “less educated” areas are the last to join the digital dysphoria, so they are primarily not the ones signing up for the new digital news channels. The urbanites and sophisticates are the ones driving the digital transformations. Inflation of course is a factor when seniors and others are on fixed or low incomes, so they have to increasingly pinch pennies, so newspaper subscriptions would naturally take a hit when food and the products of big pharma take precedence overpaying for fake news they can see free on TV. Because, of course, *everyone* is hooked up and tethered to their boob tubes and “mobile devices!” Like intravenous feeding tubes it is infinitely easier to get fake news fixes free from the alphabet channels or that come along with their mobile device plans. Staring at screens is very addictive and tends to elbow out the time needed to read and think about newspaper articles.

These are the considerations the Northwestern University academics should have considered when they conducted their mindless survey.

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E-Mail Sidney Secular: Success_Express@yahoo.com