

DieMATIE

A free press is the canary in the coal mine

At a recent *Die Matie* Alumni Press Club gathering, Pieter-Louis Myburgh, Scorpio investigative journalist and the mind behind *Gangster State*, made the shrewd point that the crucial importance of the free press is only realised when democracy is truly under threat.

What Myburgh certainly meant is that the South African Democracy is in peril, and that the free press is now more important than ever. The roots of corruption and state capture run deep, and they are being dug up by the bucket load. Many of the exploits that our country's most vocal (and best dressed) politicians make

themselves guilty of, flirts with the absurd. Pauli van Wyk's recent exposés on the excesses of the EFF frontmen, Julius Malema and Floyd Shivambu, seems better suited to the pages of Christopher Marlowe than to the realities of the political system.

One imagines that a person who has their pockets lined with millions of Rands worth of stolen money might invest in an elaborate ploy to conquer the world. Dr Heinz Doofenshmirtz would certainly have created enough "enators" to completely obliterate Perry the Platypus if he had access to the same resources.

But these people spend thou-

sands at Shoprite and the liquor shop on the corner. They adorn themselves with Gucci and Louis Vuitton and wed each other in the most lavish of ceremonies. Van Wyk is a brilliant writer and an even better journalist, but one can imagine a reader looking at a headline like "The Chronicles of Grand Azania, Part One: How a slush fund paid for Floyd Shivambu's wedding" for the umpteenth time and thinking, "Stories like this come out every day. I know what its about. I know that South Africa is filthy with corruption. To be quite honest, this is bat shit crazy!" Such a reader might be tempted to skip over this story and

the many others like it. Everyone certainly doesn't have the time to read everything. But we ignore the utility of these stories at our own peril.

A wonderful analogy for the role of the free press is that of the canary in the coalmine. Without digging too deep into the specifics of mining; a canary is carried into a mine by the miners that work it.

If the air in the mine becomes tainted with bad gasses, the canary dies, and the miners know that it's time to get out. The South African air is thick with the toxic gasses of corruption and the canary is singing like it has never sung before.

The death of the canary means

the death of democracy, so we would be wise to listen to its song.

The stories written by dedicated teams of journalists form the notes to this song, however small and insignificant they might seem. These notes, now a desperate melody, have warned and continues to warn us against the very real danger in which South Africa finds itself.

When the canary in the mine dies, the miners still have a chance to get out. If the free press stops singing, where do we go? Now is the time for the citizens of South Africa to rally behind its journalists and to make sure that they can continue doing good work.

GORRELKOP

Die kommentaar waarvoor almal bang is en nooit wil sê nie. Gorrel is nie verantwoordelik vir enige ongerief veroorsaak nie.

Platejoggies

GORREL is gedurig in die Neel-sie en dan hoor Gorrel klomp simpel musiek.

Waar is smaak heen? Gorrel dink die platejoggies moet die groot oorfone van hul koppe afhaal en vir eens luister na die soort musiek wat hulle speel.

Opvoedkunde-gebou

GORREL lewe nie in die 1800's nie.

Dit is vir Gorrel 'n redelike euskok om in dié gebou in te stap. Gorrel voel asof Gorrel in 'n museum instap.

Somerslette

GORREL dink dat al die meisies wat hul bates rondgooi in die somer somer strooi is.

Gorrel is veels te konserwatief as dit by lae halse en kortbroekies kom.

Saambly

GORREL dink nie dat dit verkeerd is van Gorrel se mede-Gorrels en Gorrelinas om saam te bly nie. Geniet julleself. Julle is jonk. Dit is beslis 'n goeie tyd om vir Gorrels en Gorrelinas beter te leer ken en mens leer werklik eers iemand ken as julle saambly.



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND REPORTING ERRORS

Die Matie is onderhewig aan 'n gedragskode wat by die SR-lid vir Media beskikbaar is. Alle klagtes word deur 'n regsdosent ondersoek, waarna *Die Matie* voor die Mediaraad kan verskyn. Klagtes moet volgens die uiteengesette prosedure binne veertien dae ná publikasie aanhangig gemaak word.

Die Matie subscribes to the South African Press Code that

prescribes news that is truthful, accurate, fair and balanced. If we don't live up to the code, please contact the Ombudsman. *Die Matie* is accountable to its readers and will correct errors where necessary. Please send any complaints to the paper's ombudsman/public editor, George Claassen, at gnclaassen@sun.ac.za or 083 543 2471.

HOOFREDAKSIE

HOOFREDAKTEUR Lian van Wyk
TESOURIER Alexander Carstens
BEDRYFSREDAKTEUR Oliver Frew
UITLEGREDAKTEUR Heléne Leonard
FOTOREDAKTEUR James Smith
AANLYNREDAKTEUR Gabriela Vijoen
ADVERTENSIEBESTUURDER Nicole Nasson
ENGLISH SUB-EDITOR Byron Latham
AFRIKAANS-SUBREDAKTEUR Dominique Fuchs
NUUS Carla Visagie
STUDENTELEWE Kesia Abrahams
DAG & NAG Willow-Ruby van der Berg
SPORT Lemuel Blignaut

KONTAK ONS / CONTACT US

E-POSADRES diematie75@gmail.com
POSADRES Langenhoven Studentesentrum; Privaatsak X1; Universiteit Stellenbosch; Matieland; 7602
WEBADRES www.diematie.com
FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/diematie
OPLAAG 4 000
VOLGENDE UITGAWE 23/10/2019
SPERDATUM 17/10/2019
ADVERTENSIES Dané Dooge diematieads@gmail.com
ARGIEF Vorige uitgawes van *Die Matie* is in die biblioteek beskikbaar

MEDEWERKERS

TEKSREDIGERING Wynand Conradie, René Esterhuyse, Zahlé Eloff, Marissa Badenhorst, Catharina van der Mescht, Kirsty Bucholz, Brynley van Aardt, Erin Walls
DRUKWERK PaarlMedia

BE A
DieMATIE
 JOURNALIST

CURIOUS?
 ADVENTUROUS?
 PARADIGM SHIFTER?

MAKE YOUR
 VOICE HEARD
 AND APPLY!

CONTACT
 CARLA VISAGIE
 21553874@SUN.AC.ZA