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Tickled Pink
That Ash Wednesday was this week, marking the beginning of Lent for many Christians in Medicine Hat, Redcliff and around the world. As a season of reflection, repentance and renewal, may these 40 days be a time of prayer, service and drawing closer to God for all who have begun their Lenten journey to the Cross.

Tickled Off
At all the spam phone calls we are getting. If your name doesn't show up on our call display we will not answer. So please leave a message or you will not get a reply. As soon as we answer one of these calls we get another 20 following.

Tickled Off
At how quiet it was at the Everett game; 4,700 people in there and at times it was like a morgue. However, you can sure make loud noises for the referees. Why don't you turn that into cheering?

Tickled Off
That Medicine Hat College is willing to host a separatist group in their institution. Maybe because there is fear of losing provincial financing.

Tickled Pink
If MLA Justin Wright would indicate if he supports Alberta being part of Canada. It would make voting easier next time around.

Tickled Off
I am a federalist, but I am annoyed at federalists who do not want separatists to hold public forums, anywhere. Freedom means listening to all arguments before you vote. Shame on MHC teachers and

Tickled Off
&
Tickled Pink

SPEAK YOUR MIND

Email:
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Tickled Off and Tickled Pink provides a venue for the free exchange of ideas in our community. While we encourage comments on every topic, the News reserves the right to edit them for length, timeliness, libel and decency. No identifying factors can be present in the submissions.

students who signed that letter.

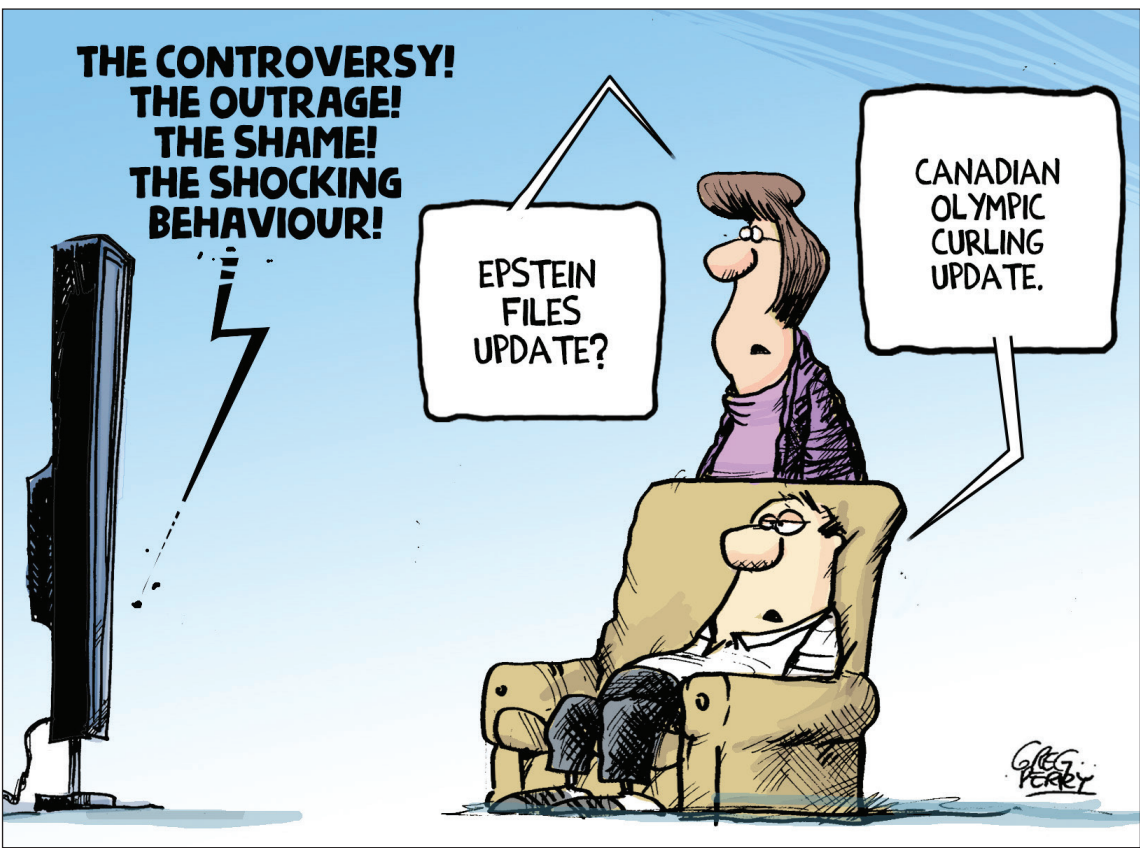
Tickled Off
Our gas prices — even Winnipeg has lower prices.

Tickled Off
Food costs are up, but what really amazes me is the number of liquor stores we have. They don't seem like they are hurting for business. Crescent Heights has five.

Tickled Pink
First taste of greenhouse cakes, yums.

Tickled Pink
This is great having the rally at MHC. There are acres and acres of space just outside the theatre doors for all of us against this to voice our opinions, too.

Tickled Pink
To see so much opposition to free speech re: upcoming presentation at MHC. Has definitely piqued my interest to attend and understand what they all want censored from inquiring minds. Decisions are



better made knowing both sides of the issues.

Tickled Pink
Pleased people are speaking up and engaging each other regarding MHC's choice to rent a facility to Rebel News. As a recent letter to the editor said, "freedom of speech and/or expression" walks a fine line that is easily crossed — as witnessed daily on social media. Let's think about this a little deeper, just as the college board and president have been requested to do.

Tickled Pink
I am so proud to be a Canadian cheering our athletes on in Italy. I however wonder if separatists will wake up that this just one more thing they will throw out with the bathwater. The list is long.

Tickled Off
So how has Medicine Hat benefited from Danielle Smith being our MLA? Zero benefit comes to mind. Every other constituency, think Fort Saskatchewan, could argue they have benefited more.

Tickled Off
Pretty sad our riding has an MIA premier and MLAs. Too busy avoiding the hard facts of disastrous outcomes in health care A bad day when NDP is still better than what we've got.

Tickled Pink
We have the right to free speech, but we do not have the right to be wrong. Who decides this? Science.

Tickled Off
A recent letter to the editor

on self education and news forgot an important point: critical thought and analysis. Yes, one ought to be informed about their community, region, nation and the world, but if that same person lacks the ability to critically analyze and think about such news or information then the moniker "self-educated" becomes what? There is more than one answer to this question I pose.

Tickled Pink
If Medicine Hat would try to get the AI data centre.

Tickled Off
By Kennedy's conduct/language when he was called out for cheating. Completely inappropriate and a very poor example of sportsmanship or lack thereof. You're purporting to be professionals, act like it.

Separatist energy should be put to better use

A major issue brewing slowly but firmly in Alberta is that of Alberta separating from Canada. This should alarm everyone not only in Alberta but throughout Canada. Here we are living in the wealthiest province of a peaceful and wonderful country, yet we have some people amongst us who are determined to break our marvellous country.

A group of misguided, would-be separatists have been playing havoc by meeting officials in the White House to seek separation, seeking funds to do so and possibly joining the U.S. — our neighbour/allay turned enemy/antagonist! Whichever one looks at it, this is a classic example of foreign interference in our domestic affairs. I agree with B.C. Premier David Eby when he said that "To go to a foreign country and to ask for assistance in breaking up Canada, there's an old-fashioned word for that. And that word is treason."

The group has no mandate to speak on behalf of Albertans or to represent them. According to André Lecours, a professor of political science at the University of Ottawa, "What makes this movement so different is that none of these people associated with Alberta's push for independence are democratically elected. They don't hold any public office — I find it strange that the Trump administration

would meet with non-elected officials. They have no formal democratic legitimacy."

Our beloved right-wing premier, Danielle Smith, has been noticeably noncommittal, trumpeting her usual call for "a strong and sovereign Alberta within a united Canada" and confusing the issue. The least that Albertans expect from their provincial leaders is to defend our sovereignty and take a firm stand against separation. The premier's silence and the separatists' activities are giving more ammunition to President Trump, the "Emperor of the Universe," who has constantly threatened to annex Canada and turn it into the 51st state.

None of the Alberta Government MLAs — UCP members — took up the challenge of NDP leader Naheed Nenshi to sign a pledge to Canada and denounce separatism, clearly showing that they don't have the courage to stand up for their country against their party's Alberta Prosperity Project faction. These MLAs have conveniently forgotten that they already have taken an oath of allegiance to the Crown to become an MLA. Signing the pledge is not a partisan issue; it's to proudly declare one's patriotism in which exercise UCP MLAs have failed miserably.

Lawyer Jeffrey Rath, who

appears to be the separatists' spokesman, and his colleagues should be well-advised to study the results of the failed Quebec separatists. There are already signs that the talk of separation is affecting investments in Alberta where many potential investors have taken a wait-and-see attitude. One wonders if the separatists have taken into consideration the political, economic and social issues that landlocked independent Alberta will have to face.

However, it's comforting to learn that according to the recent Angus Reid Institute survey 65 per cent of the Albertans polled said they would either vote to stay in Canada or lean toward voting that way if a referendum on Alberta separation were held today, while 29 per cent say they would vote or lean toward voting to leave. Of the two-thirds who say they want to remain in Canada, 57 per cent said they would vote to stay, while eight per cent say they would lean toward voting to stay.

The survey also found that majority of respondents expressed disapproval of how Premier Danielle Smith has neutrally approached the separatism question so far, giving higher marks to Prime Minister Mark Carney, Alberta NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi and former premier Jason Kenney, who have taken more federalist positions. Even former

Prime Ministers Stephen Harper and Jean Chretien have come out strongly for Canada. The Reid poll also indicated that millions, including me, would move away from Alberta in the event of separation. I hope the separatists will be happy to see thousands of empty homes, economic devastation and unemployment caused by fleeing Albertans. It would also make an amusing picture when Trump decides to send his "goons" — the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) troops — to quell protests down Calgary's Stephen Avenue or Edmonton's Jasper Avenue!

One doesn't have to be a rocket scientist to know that Alberta always has had issues with Ottawa, the main one being that it gets less than what it sends in equalization payments. This is a domestic issue and can be considered as a family saga which can be handled by calmly discussing it rather than issuing threats. Members of a family don't leave the house because they have had a difference of opinion with their father; they respectfully hold a family meeting to resolve the issue. Same thing can be done between Ottawa and Alberta in the spirit of Team Canada and without making it a political issue.

The separatists will have a long legal battle with Indigenous



Mansoor Ladha
Mansoor's Musings

leaders who have denounced their movement as "illegitimate" and "unconstitutional" while several Alberta First Nation communities are legally challenging the legislation for citizen-led petitions in the province. With the secessionist movements in both Quebec and Alberta and constant threats from President Trump, Canada needs to present a united front, not divisions. It's time for all that separatist energy to be put to better use.

Mansoor Ladha is an award-winning Calgary-based journalist, travel writer and author of Canadian Experience, Aga Khan: Bridge between East & West, Memoirs of a Muhindi: Fleeing East Africa for the West, And A Portrait in Pluralism: Aga Khan's Shia Ismaili Muslims. He was publisher of Morinville Mirror and Redwater Tribune.

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