

Stelmach's joke still insensitive



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The results of last week's election have spawned a number of discussions—the obvious need for proportional representation, the possibility that voter apathy is to blame for an even larger Conservative majority government, why it would be in the best interest of opposition parties such as the Liberals and the NDP to merge as one in order to prevent split-voting—the list goes on.

One thing that hasn't been mentioned, however, is a remark that newly re-elected premier Ed Stelmach made during his victory speech. Dumbfounded by the landslide Conservative win, I decided to listen to Stelmach's speech to see just why the media kept touting the rhetoric that "Albertans are becoming more comfortable with Ed." Stelmach's speech bored me for the most part, but the man came off as humble—at least, more so than Ralph Klein ever did during his tenure. Still, I was struck by his remark about how he's glad that his grandparents' boat arrived in Canada because the other destination would have been Argentina. He quickly added that his Spanish wasn't all that great either, which made the audience chuckle. What's even sadder is that the people at CTV News were

praising Stelmach's good sense of humour.

A few people I know took the remark at face value and felt that Stelmach was simply expressing happiness about living in Alberta. But if this were the case, shouldn't it be enough to say just that and nothing more? There's no need to bring up the other, supposedly lesser choice. It's similar to how Canadians will put down Americans any chance they get. To me, this just makes the "better" one sound insecure because in order to make themselves look good, they need to lower someone else.

If Stelmach had actually meant to make a joke, that makes him more of a jackass than if he were simply stating facts. Unfortunately, culturally insensitive remarks like these are so subtle these days that few people seem to pick up on them. Stelmach didn't say it outright, but by stating that Argentina would have been the other choice, he's suggesting that it isn't the best place to live in—which is true, if you're part of the poor majority—but that's completely dismissing all the reasons why that is. It forgets the fact that when his grandparents left their motherland, Argentina was one of the ten richest countries in the world. Unfortunately, it's been hit by several recessions that it hasn't been able to completely recover from due to pressures to accept neo-liberal ideals.

One of the biggest reasons that people used to say that Canada is the best country to live in is that it's multicultural. And it seems that just because Canada is officially multicultural, this gives Canadians some false sense

that Canada is the only multicultural country in the world, which is simply untrue. Argentina itself is a land of immigrants consisting mainly of people with various European backgrounds and a growing number of Asians settling in Buenos Aires.

All in all, Stelmach trying to make Alberta look great by comparing it with Argentina is laughable since Alberta's electoral system is just about as corrupt, if not worse, than that of any other "third world" country—anyone who tried to find out where they should vote using Elections Alberta's website or calling their phone lines should know what I'm talking about.

To be fair, I don't think Stelmach was purposely trying to be culturally insensitive before, but people laughed because either one person who finds the humour in even the most humourless situations laughed and everyone followed suit or the audience genuinely thought the remark was funny. However, the fact still remains that Stelmach's "joke" was based on ignorant assumptions and stereotypes. This is an issue that goes beyond this election. These kinds of jokes are told everyday with the intention of marginalizing groups of people using supposedly inherent characteristics as a basis.

When these everyday offences are so easily dismissed and become part of the logic of politicians and of those in power, they leak into our laws and our institutions. And because people are unable to recognize the subtle but misguided ideas upon which the rules are based on, injustices remain.

THE GATEWAY PRESENTS...

The 1st annual Gateway photo contest!
WE'VE SHOWN YOU OURS, NOW SHOW US YOURS!

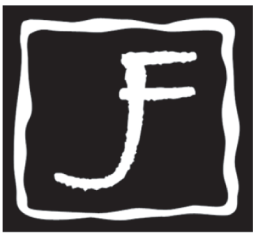


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Want to see your photo printed 11000 times in sweet, sexy soy ink? Then send your entry to photo@gateway.ualberta.ca with the subject line Photo Contest!. There may even be some fun prizes up for grabs—we haven't planned that far ahead yet. **Entries are due 21 March at 11:59pm**, and Gateway volunteers are ineligible. Be sure to include your full name and where you can be reached.



BENEFIT CONCERT
FRIDAY, MARCH 14
@ THE PAWN SHOP
(10551 Whyte Avenue)



THE HOODS

johnny feelgood



Doors @8
1st Band @10

Tickets \$15

Available in advance at The Pawn Shop, UofA InfoLink or by calling 444-1547. Limited number of tickets will be Available at the door.



4 BANDS - 1 NIGHT
1 GREAT CAUSE!

LIVERight



Funds raised by LISA are used to support liver research, education and support programs in Northern Alberta.

LISA is an official voluntary chapter of the Canadian Liver Foundation and is based out of the University of Alberta.

For more visit www.liverinfo.ca.

MITOSIS: (cell division)

Interphase → Prophase → Metaphase → Anaphase → Telophase → daughter cells

Led a fundraising campaign for Canadian Cancer Society. (sold 200 wristbands)

PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) → EE

Denaturation
Annealing
Extension

Eu falo Portuguese.
Je parle aussi Français.

Organized Multicultural Food Fest Fundraiser

RELIGIONS FASCINATE ME.

The Brazilian in me likes Samba.
The Indian in me likes Hindi music.

There's a hula hoop under my bed.

Doing absolutely nothing for a few days is OKAY.

T.S. Eliot's Rhapsody on a Windy Night is on my computer.

STUDENTS FOR LITERACY

THE HOMEWORK CLUB

Tutored kids in math & science

I like Chess. And Havarti.

COMPASSION:

Not being able to know what to say but being able to know how to listen.

Dr. Matthew Lukwiba: Ugandan doctor who confronted Ebola.

I'm a visual learner.

I boil my textbooks down to 10 pages.

a phone translation service for immigrant patients.

I'm raising \$ for Language Line.

I'm taking Cellular & Molecular Biology.

WORLD YOUTH DAY MEDICAL TEAM

Classes 9-11:30am
research until 6pm
study until midnight

Photography is my new hobby.

Diels Alder Reaction (cycloaddition)

Can I have 5 more minutes? (to sleep in)

A kids' science event I organized → froze donuts in liquid nitrogen.

STUFF TO GET FOR LAB:

- acrylamide
- agarose
- ethidium bromide
- loading dye
- 100 bp ladder

Hematologist?
Gastroenterologist?
Psychiatrist?
Cardiologist?

I always carry my agenda. It's my brain.

All I've done I wouldn't have thought I could.

A kids' science event I organized → froze donuts in liquid nitrogen.

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IF YOU'RE WAY TOO BUSY TO APPLY FOR THIS SCHOLARSHIP, WE REALLY THINK YOU SHOULD APPLY FOR THIS SCHOLARSHIP.

You'd swear she were two people. How else could Maya juggle the zillion things she does, from molecular biology exams to helping make the world a better place? Maybe you see yourself in her, which makes you a great candidate for the Millennium Excellence Award. It's a scholarship worth up to \$10,000 plus unique learning opportunities for students who are not only academic achievers, but also leaders and innovators in their communities. So if you're as driven to lead as you are to learn, let us know.

MAYA ROSE MALIAKKAL
Millennium Excellence Award Recipient

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Millennium Scholarships **Les bourses du millénaire**

FIND THE APPLICATION FORM AND DEADLINE AT
www.excellenceaward.ca

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