

Allowing our civil liberties to be eroded

by MARK PAVILONS

Most of us skip along merrily in our daily lives, enjoying the rights and freedoms granted to us in this beautiful country of ours.

We are a multi-cultural mosaic ? a welcoming, giving, embracing society.

We also cherish, and extend basic human rights, to all who've been denied them. We are activists, lobbyists, environmentalists, and community role models. We care about our neighbours.

While most of us may not fully appreciate the roles and responsibilities of all levels of government, we're assured that politicians and civil servants are working in our best interests.

That's the basis of our system and for the most part, it works. Okay, it may not be the best in terms of citizen access, response and timely action, but it has served Canadians and newcomers alike very well since Confederation.

But the world has changed, my friends, and our civil liberties and rights are being eroded, and chipped away, bit by bit.

It was blunt at first, with waves of in-your-face political correctness, sprinkled with apologetic measures and rhetoric.

For the most part, these measures, moves, documents and policies were needed, and long overdue.

But in some cases, we've been stripped of some very fundamental rights, some of which threaten our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In the past few years, books and passages have been either altered or removed, deemed by the powers that be to be either offensive, ?too religious,??or not inclusive enough. Symbols, even images on maple syrup bottles, got an upgrade.

In our country, school boards and other organizations have banned books, and criticized parts of the Holy Bible for their references. We now use Common Era (CE) and Before the Common Era (BCE) as year notations for the Gregorian or Julian calendar ??equivalent to the Anno Domini (AD) and Before Christ (BC). But we avoid those religious timelines.

I?get the intention behind such moves, but come on. Those who know their history know that banning books is the first step in fueling tyranny, fascism and citizen control. Yes, restricting what residents can read and know is a way to mold them, break them, bend them and make them subservient.

Similarly, statues honouring our historic figures have been removed, since they were, at one time, involved in the slave trade.

Watching our media ?soften? and ? in the case of the U.S. ??eing refused access ??s not only horrible, but another step towards dictatorship.

Our federal government is taking our guns away.

Our premier is dumping perfectly good hooch on the street.

There are hundreds of examples where the ?word police? are watching, ready to swoop in and pick something apart.

Being a Boomer, I'm not fazed by these things. I?grew up when bigotry, racism and sexism were commonplace. But that doesn't

mean we all practiced these things. Being aware of an issue, poking fun at it, and learning how not to engage in such things is what led us into the light. How subsequent generations didn't realize this, or 'get it,' is beyond me.

We lived through it, experienced the best and the worst. I had thought we reached a place of common ground, flexibility, compassion, understanding and give and take.

I truly believe that deep down, the majority of citizens are kind, caring, accepting, and neighbourly.

They are not necessarily impacted by racism or sexism on a daily basis so it's not top of mind.

It becomes a bit of an issue when government moves to announce wide-sweeping changes to syntax, grammar, gender terms and religious ideals. Governments, pushed by special interest groups, want take residents by the hand 'like children' and lead them into a peaceful, non-confrontational playground where everyone gets along.

How is that working out?

Canada has become a leader in the fight for equality and righting wrongs. We have entire levels of bureaucracy dedicated to changing mind sets and behaviours.

Some mandates, policies and measures have worked. Others have not.

It's been said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

The recent actions by the U.S. are proof of that. Kidnapping government leaders, stealing oil and killing citizens - how is any of this in any way acceptable?

It's sad how anyone and any government can legitimize their actions, all in the name of democracy, protecting its citizens and saving the world.

I'm sure Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Hitler and Mussolini thought the same way. Can we now add Trump to that list?

They all began by substituting common sense and civil liberties with lies, double-speak, fear, and party gibberish.

And people ate it up, and went back for seconds.

Some, risking their lives, opposed draconian measures in an attempt to slow the evil. Thousands of demonstrators in Iran have been killed and the regime there promises swift action and executions!

Here, we're facing new threats - economic tariffs, high costs of living, out of control grocery prices, job uncertainty and housing shortages. Yes, these are economic tangibles, but they do impact our ability to get out and protest, and act on our behalf. Many homeowners are just too stressed and tired to ensure their liberties are protected.

So, behind the scenes, bit by bit, we lose some of our power.

Government services are navigated online and only the well-seasoned can handle the ebbs and currents of virtual rabbit holes. Spending a good portion of our lives on hold would test anyone's mettle.

An overburdened system - at every level - leads to fast-tracking, backlogs, inefficiencies and waste.

Few of us turn to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for comfort. In these troublesome times, we cling to family, count our pennies

and cross our fingers.

And as announcement after announcement test our freedoms, we don't even blink an eye.

Will we go down kicking and screaming, or with nary a whimper?