

# THE FREE PRESS OPINION

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## Dirty campaign gets underway

**A**nd politicians wonder why they get no respect. In the past week, two incidents have given more than enough ammo to those who would shoot down the once honourable profession of public service. It would appear the campaign to see who will be the next premier will be down and dirty, with the NDP leading the way.

First, there was Glenn Clark talking about Liberal leader Gordon Campbell and Reform boss Jack Weisgerber. In a speech to New Democrats he said the pair are in favour of cutting, cutting and cutting – “with a capital K.” Mr. Clark, not showing the brilliant political acumen he’s supposed to possess, tried to pass it off as a reference to Ralph Klein. Most people, including the somewhat stunned audience of New Democrats, thought it a reference to the KKK and an attempt to tie the right-wing leanings of Campbell and Weisgerber with the Aryan movement.

And, assuming a Lower Mainland newspaper can be trusted, it would appear that a heretofore unknown NDP backbencher believes you have to be white to belong to the Reform party. Norm Lortie, referring to the fact a one-time Liberal hopeful named Gurmant Grewal is being wooed by the Reformers, said: “Does that mean there’s no difference between Liberal and Reform? I find it incredulous that somebody from an ethnic minority group would join Reform.”

During the last election, then-Liberal leader Gordon Wilson stood between the bickering Mike Harcourt and Rita Johnston and declared: “This is what’s wrong with the system.”

Those words are just as relevant today. There are plenty of issues to debate without trying to raise the red herring of racism in the Reform Party.

British Columbians deserve better. It’s that simple.

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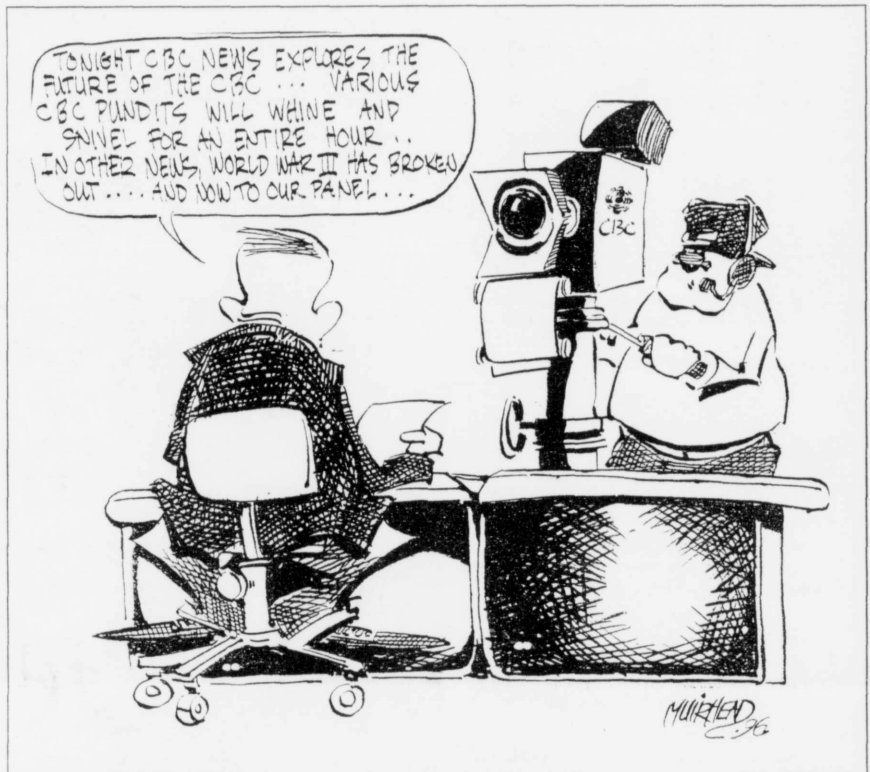
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## Fighting the dental monster

**M**en, using the term in a gender specific sense, are funny creatures. Something as simple as a cold can render them useless, in need of emotional and physical support; but major injuries are shrugged off as inconsequential, nothing to worry about.

There is plenty of anecdotal evidence to support this claim (there is no empirical data because the scientific community, comprised mostly of men, refuse to conduct such studies).

Take rugby, as an example. Short of a protruding bone, players are expected to get off the field on their own and make their way to the pub for proper medical attention. Or the rodeo. If there’s no blood, internal or external, cowboys will walk out of the ring under their own steam... then collapse.

But a cold smashes through the macho facade, showing men at their most vulnerable. However,



**RUMOUR MILLS**

Shane Mills

it’s not only Mother Nature’s punishment for excessive behaviour that lays a beating on the psyche of a man, leaving mounds of scars. There is the trip to the dentist.

Bungee-jumping, naked, is less of a threat than a trip to the dentist, the maniac with the drill.

Maybe it goes back to childhood, when a trip to the dentist meant climbing stairs that numbered into the thousands. Then slipping into a chair, facing a needle usually reserved for putting elephants to sleep and

discovering there wasn’t nearly enough freezing contained within the syringe.

The only redeeming memory of visiting the dentist was the lack of a rubber dam. Condoms for the mouth might be hygienic but they’re damn uncomfortable.

And the movies, those bastions of accuracy, do nothing to enhance the enjoyment of visits to the dentist. Remember the crazed man with the drill in Marathon Man?

All is not lost, though. There is hope. There is a dentist (admittedly, maybe more than one) that takes away the pain, who makes root canal work feel like a trip to Baskin Robbins. A little tingly but somehow enjoyable.

The fun part might stem from the television, which allows you to watch Bond when he was still Steele and catch the early edition of Sports Desk. Life’s not nearly so bad, except for that damn dam.

As well, there’s a great desire to have the dentist play second base...so soft are those gifted hands.

And, yes, there are more appointments scheduled. So keep up the good, gentle, painless work.