

THE FREE PRESS OPINION

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1998

PHONE 564-0005

"The theory of a free press is that the truth will emerge from free reporting and free discussion." Walter Lippman

THE PRINCE GEORGE FREE PRESS

PUBLISHER LORNE DOERKSON
EDITOR CAM MCALPINE
ADVERTISING MANAGER MARIE CARSON

#200-1515 SECOND AVENUE, PRINCE GEORGE, B.C. V2L 3B8
PHONE: 564-0005 FAX: 562-0025

Back room boy, yesterday's man

Joe only knows what would possess former prime minister Clark to give up the foreign affairs lifestyle to which he has become accustomed in favour of masochism. The things Joe Clark has had to put up with in his bid to take back the leadership of the federal Progressive Conservative party – lesser men's voices would crack. Preston Manning, were he in Mr. Clark's shoes, would have his back against a wall and his old defensive falsetto whine going at 5,000 rpm.

Not Mr. Clark, though. When his opponents in the leadership race accuse him of not having laid out a single point of policy, of constantly reverting to the moot point that people know what they're getting when they get Joe Clark, that he's the man for the country because he's held the top post before, Mr. Clark demurs. Then he sputters. Then he calmly states that people know what they're getting when they get Joe Clark.

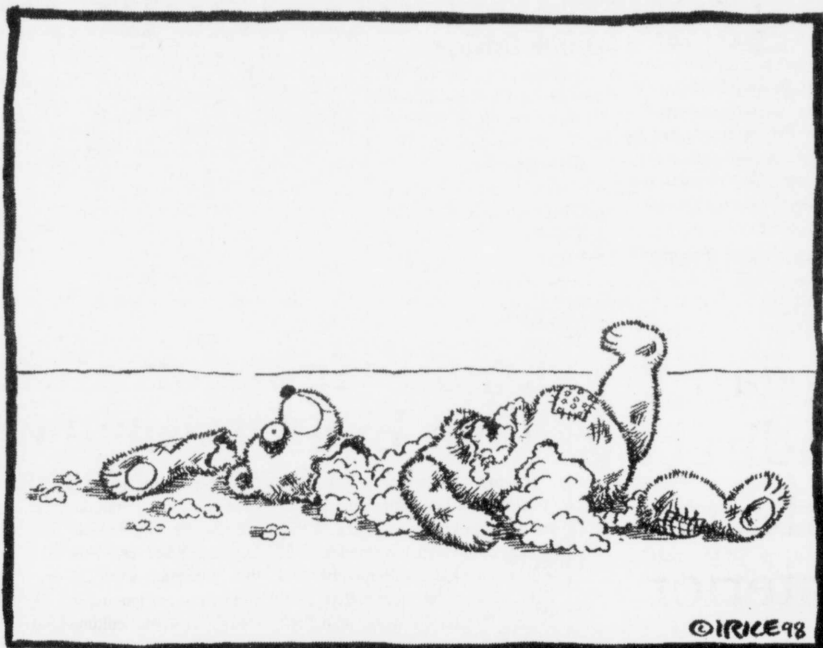
Mr. Clark is yesterday's man, and he's good at it. He's also good at diplomacy and statehood. He is us. We are him (whether we like it or not). He is stereotypically Canadian and he's done a lot of good for Canada. But that's not necessarily a positive trait if you want to be prime minister.

Besides, the Tories have said they're going for change this time around. Out with the old, in with the new. They've even gone with a new system of one person, one vote polling. No more convention-day lunacy, no more back room politicking.

Which brings up another of the candidates with a shot at the leadership. Hugh Segal may not be yesterday's politician, but he is yesterday's bureaucrat and spin doctor. He was the one handing out the back room martinis in the Mulroney heyday. He's a party man through and through and should garner quite a few votes for it, especially when you factor in the membership drive he orchestrated.

And speaking of membership drives, David Orchard, the "dark horse," has managed to bulk Conservative numbers up too. Unfortunately, he's doing it by fighting one issue, an issue that essentially won the 1989 election for the party. Mr. Orchard doesn't like it, and he's going to fight it from the inside.

It's called implosion. The Tories have been practicing self-destruction for years now. The latest leadership drive proves they may finally have perfected it.



ANOTHER ALBANIAN REBEL STAMPED OUT BY SERBIAN SECURITY FORCES

Sick and tired of vanilla

There is one thing to be said for having only one channel on the tube. It gets you to bed early on a Sunday night. I mean there you are, folding laundry after dinner, so you flick on the TV to keep you company, and what's on? *Emily of New Moon*. Good enough reason to start getting the kids ready for bed, I'll say that much.

Kids are sleeping, kitchen's cleaned up. Time to kick back with a little mind candy before the week starts, so you flick the tube back on...and you catch the end of *An Intimate Evening With Anne Murray*. Now I don't know about you, but I got intimate enough with the grand dame of Canadian vanilla pop while dozing off to the sounds of AM radio as a 10-year-old. Worse, the guest performer for Anne's penultimate song is none other than the grand master of Canadian vanilla rock, Bryan Adams.

So you think you can hang on 'til the end of Anne without getting all teary-eyed and something good will come on. But then they hit you with *The Cynthia Dale Show*. "Cynthia who?" Apparently she was on that Canadian vanilla cop/lawyer show *Street Legal*.

least what is offered back to us as Canadian culture. It's all so achingly realist.

Anne Murray and Bryan Adams could be the boy and girl next door. *Emily of New Moon* doesn't try to entertain – it's serious, for God's sake. Margaret Atwood is the same in fiction.

It is certainly reflective of a certain Canadian consciousness. We're a hard-working nation that settles its differences by negotiation, not revolution. We have a history, but we don't have a myth.

Unfortunately television is all about myth. It's about taking us away from the mundane. It's about entertaining us and creating a world we can't have.

There is strong Canadian programming, make no mistake. Perhaps it's indicative of our realist nature, then, that the best programming resides in the realm of news and current events.

The CRTC isn't the problem. They just make the quotas. And whatever you may think, Canadian culture needs its quotas.

What we fill those quotas with is the problem. And unless we start throwing a little mocha fudge mind candy out there, we'll continue to occupy the Sunday night time slot.



MCALPINE VIEW

Cam McAlpine

In between it all you're assaulted by ads for Crazy Willy's, so you know how valuable the advertising space is. And the worst thing about it all is that when you finally throw your hands up and go to bed, the good programming – the news – is just about to come on.

All of which demonstrates the weakness of Canadian culture, or at

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A POLITICALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER
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