

# Editorial

## Band-aids no solution

I chanced into my favorite watering hole one evening last week and over my usual fare of 'milk and cookies' got into a discussion with a friend about the Western Canada-based Reform Party.

Aside from occasional caustic comments, reserved for this space, about politicians and party politics, I tend to shy away from political discussions when socializing.

For the most part, discussing politics while socializing, usually puts a person in a no-win situation.

If you disagree too vehemently about your companion's political beliefs or his political philosophy, you tend to either end up losing a friend or gaining an enemy. Neither happenstance being particularly attractive.

If, on the other hand, you remain silent or nod your head occasionally to indicate you are still listening while your companion rambles on about his political preferences (all the while seething inside because you totally disagree with the rhetorical rantings) you end up somehow feeling soiled and promise yourself to avoid the person like the proverbial plague should he/she, ever again come within hailing distance.

I feel, however, the Reform Party is another kettle of fish (or more accurately, another bushel of wheat) and should be inspected with a less than jaundiced eye if only because the party appears to be gaining converts throughout Canada.

The discussion last week about the Reform Party and its leader, Preston Manning, wasn't a long one and ended amicably enough. Mainly because I expressed the opinion that a supposed political party without any kind of philosophic platform was merely reaping the harvest of Canadians disillusioned with our current crop of so-called political leaders and the political system in general.

My friend could only counter with, "Well, they (the Reform Party) couldn't do any worse than the bozos we've got running the country right now!"  
End of conversation.

(Ironically, a poll released by Gallup this past Thursday appeared to show that Canadians, as a whole, are fed up with the "bozos" at the federal level. The poll asked who would make the best Prime Minister. Twenty-seven per cent chose Liberal leader Jean Chretien; 24 per cent chose NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin and only 17 per cent chose our incumbent Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney. Significantly, 23 per cent would have none of the afore-mentioned politicians as our Prime Minister.)  
But what does the Reform Party

"As I See It"

by Colin Gibson



ty offer, other than a temporary shelter for disaffected voters?

It's leader, Preston Manning, is the son of Ernest Manning, former Alberta Social Credit Premier.

Manning senior was a right-wing populist whose dreams of strong national Social Credit political party founded on the rocks of reality. He, as his son is attempting to do, felt a national political base could be established mainly by wooing the disenfranchised away from the mainstream federal political parties.

Manning senior failed in his quest in the 60's mainly because the stench of political opportunism wafted from the party ranks, while the Socreds political platform had enough holes in it to make treading across it quite dangerous.

Manning junior apparently didn't learn anything from his father's failure on the national scene because he is attempting the same magic trick once again, with mirrors instead of substance.

The Reform Party won't campaign in Quebec. A broad hint that Quebec is not needed in Canada. This move is meant to appease Westerners and other like-minded English-speaking Canadians who are fed-up with Quebec's demands.

The Reform Party intends to tighten up immigration laws. This is meant to appease those bigoted Canadians who sleep walk on the job all day while complaining that people of other colors and races are threatening their livelihood.

Both populist measures geared to stealing votes.

These and other regional populist proposals are being tossed around by Manning and the Reform Party and the disenfranchised are lapping it up.

Change for the sake of change is not the answer to Canada's problems. Well-thought-out political reforms based on reality does not appear to be the Reform Party's style.

Band-aids won't cure Canada's political, social and economic ills.

And it appears Band-aids are the only things the Reform Party has to offer.

As I see it, anyway.

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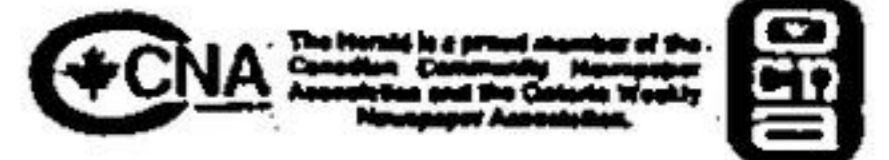
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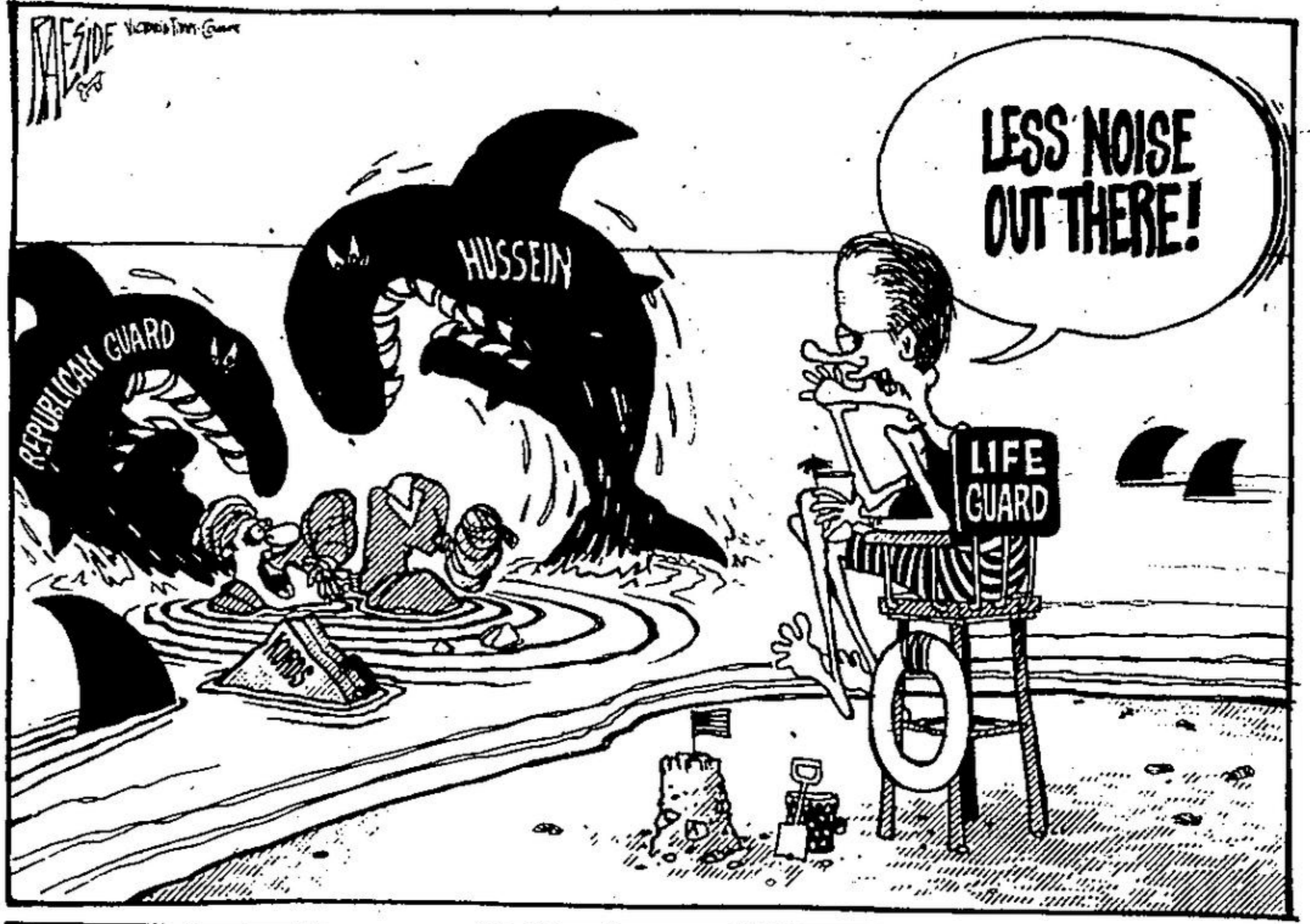
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## The Cuddly One shows the way

Just when we'd begun to despair of politicians' ability to do the right thing in a national crisis, along comes Ilona Staller to restore our faith.

You're familiar with Ilona Staller, of course. She's the porn star - the one who goes by the name of La Cicciolina, or The Little Cuddly One - who managed to get elected to the Italian parliament a few years back.

Canadians, being a reserved sort of people, were naturally a bit taken aback at the notion that the Italians would elect as a Member of Parliament someone whose only apparent talent was disrobing.

Possibly, the Italian voter simply scanned the list of candidates' names in the polling booth and reasoned: "Well, since we're bound to end up with a bum anyway..."

Predictably, Ms. Staller has turned out to be an unorthodox sort of politician. Last summer, she made headlines by offering to sleep with Saddam Hussein if this would defuse the Gulf Crisis.

A few months earlier she actually came to Canada and gave a series of performances in strip clubs - thus demonstrating a quite unprecedented commitment to the principle of full disclosure.

In any case, I should confess that Ms. Staller has always been a political hero of mine.

Question her morals, if you like. But the fact remains that a politician is seldom less harmful than when disrobing in public.

Depending on the politician, this sort of thing might frighten the horses, a little. But it won't add a single nickel to the national debt.

And now, Ms. Staller has taken an even bolder initiative. Just the other day, the papers reported

Weir's World  
by Ian Weir  
Thomson News Service



that she has resigned her seat, citing this as her personal attempt to help ease her government's current crisis.

Stop for just a moment, and think about this. Here is a politician who sees her country in turmoil. She asks herself the question: what is the single most helpful thing a politician could do at this point in time?

And she reaches the conclusion: quit politics.

By golly, what a glorious precedent.

Here in Canada, there's already a lot of talk about finding some way to prevent politicians from digging the country into an ever-deeper hole in their earnest attempts to help.

There's talk about giving voters the right to recall an MP in midterm. Basically, this is the modern version of tarring and feathering and riding out of town on a rail - it achieves the same

end, although it isn't nearly as much fun.

There's even talk of forcing politicians to submit every major policy initiative to a national referendum.

Naturally, this sounds lovely in theory - allow Canadians to reach a national consensus of opinion on such issues as constitutional reform. All the same, a question needs to be asked: does this seem to you to be a country which is currently capable of agreeing on anything?

It's the sort of thing that makes you remember that the word "referendum" comes from two Latin roots - "refer", meaning "to avoid the decision you were elected to make", and "dum" meaning more or less what it sounds like.

No, forget about referenda and rights of recall. Ilona Staller, The Little Cuddly One, has pointed out the best path.

Just imagine, say if the prime minister had awakened one morning four years or so ago, and said to himself:

"Two paths are open to me. On the one hand, I could solve all of Canada's constitutional problems forever by inventing something called the Meech Lake Accord.

"On the other hand, I could just pursue a rewarding career in show-business, under the stage name of The Big Perplexed One..."

Oh, those roads not taken.

## Write us a letter!

The Herald wants to hear from you. If you have an opinion you want to express or a comment to make, send us a letter or drop by the office. Our address is 45 Guelph Street, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 3Z6.

All letters must be signed. Please include your address and telephone number for verification.

The Herald reserves the right to edit letters due to space limitations.

## Poets' Corner

**FORGET THE TEARS**  
Time stand still  
while people fly by.  
I can tell you're hunting  
by the look in your eye,  
if you need to cry,  
I'll be there,  
to put your head  
on my shoulder  
and forget the tears.  
by Sean Davis,  
Acton.

**THE BEST THAT YOU CAN BE**  
It's not about muscle  
It's not about weight  
It's not about inches  
Or getting a date.  
It's got nothing to do  
With comparing your looks  
To the models you see  
In those glossy books.  
Your body's the temple  
That houses your soul  
So keeping it fit  
Serves more than one goal.

My body's the one thing  
That belongs just to me  
So that's why I'll keep it  
The best it can be.  
By J.B., Acton.

**MOVING ON**  
Quicksilver beams  
Of dried-up dreams  
I offer to you now -  
A marriage dead  
Inside your head  
A long-forgotten vow.  
A future dies  
A lover cries  
Another walks away  
For who can tell  
When daydreams fell  
And tumbled into clay.  
A friendship starts  
From broken hearts  
A melody of pain -  
Another face  
A warm embrace  
Rekindle hope again.  
By B. Brooke, Acton.