

Wanted: A leader with style

Where have all the charismatic leaders gone? Take a look at the political landscape around the world and what do you see—bores, bumblers and buffoons.

Let's start here in Ontario. Mike Harris has been in power almost a year and a half and while he certainly can't be accused of standing by and doing nothing, he is dull to say the least. Put him in a golf shirt and he seems to loosen up somewhat, but stick him in a three-piece suit before the Queen's Park press gallery and he could easily be confused with a cardboard cutout.

Now that Liberal Lyn McLeod (aka Mrs. Doubtfire) is gone (was she ever here?) the Liberals have served up Dalton McGuinty. What little we've seen of ol' Dalton makes us long for the days of that firecracker Bob Nixon. Check out the word boring in the dictionary and you'll find Dalton's picture.

Howard Hampton leads the Ontario NDP (Newly Deceased Party) and nine out of 10 Ontarians probably wouldn't know him if they ran over him with their car.

On the national front we have Prime Minister Jean Chretien who has managed in the past three years to avoid doing or saying anything to upset anyone—anywhere. I don't mean to be cruel, but hell, half the time I can't understand whether he just said something that ticked me off or not. I wasn't a big fan of Pierre Trudeau's but at least the man had style.

The official Opposition—the Blocheads—apparently thought their leader was so dull (and lacking in ideas) they forced him to tender his resignation. A few months ago I quizzed a roomful of reporters and

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John McGhie

editors as to what the man's name was (Michel Gauthier) and not one could come up with it.

In third place federally we have Preston Manning, or if you prefer, the man with the world's most irritating voice. A few months ago Preston opted for a new hairdo in a bid to make him more appealing to young voters. What it did was make him look like Kramer on a bad hair day.

Then there's Jean Charest—Tory, party of two. He has the hair Preston would kill for, but little else.

Last month Americans had the choice between Bill Clinton, Bob Dole and Ross Perot. Kinda reminded one of Curly, Larry and Moe.

Russia has Boris Yeltsin, who when he is not near death's door, looks like he's already dead.

John Major is no Maggie Thatcher in Britain, but wearing a dress probably wouldn't hurt his popularity.

Where are the Kennedys, Trudeaus and Thatchers that this generation needs? Good or bad, these leaders stirred people's passions. When they spoke, people listened. They made us angry. They made us proud. They moved us.

In today's politics bland is beautiful. And we are worse off because of it.

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