

A swinging Clark springs back to life

Politics. To borrow the old Chuck Berry saw, it goes to show you never can tell.

Just when you thought the old man was dead in the water, Joe Clark springs back to life. With his dukes up. Swinging.

They're aimed at the perpetually smiley mug of Canada's newest political leader, Stockwell Day.

For anyone — which is virtually everyone, as far as I can tell — who missed the whole Canadian Alliance juggernaut, the party's top dog is easy to spot. The only thing he enjoys more than jogging or rollerblading is back-pedaling quickly to beat the crazy notion that he'll impose his moral eye view on Canadian law.

Those have him standing against abortion, for capital punishment, for stricter sentencing and either for or against government funding for religious schools, no one seems sure.

All that standing is apt to make a man's feet tired. Yet his task is a breeze compared to old Joe, who has been busy doing things like standing in the way of change, or standing up against the inevitable.

Give him points for trying. First Joe attempted to smear some fresh make-up on the old party's face by trotting his comely daughter around wherever he went. If possible, she's even more smiley than Day is, although being younger, she has an excuse.

But with her deciding to leave daddy's side to take a job in Toronto, Mr. Clark has had to find a new pastime, which is to irritate Day by making like Clint Eastwood.

I like it. I like westerns. I'm hoping if I ever interview Joe, he'll lead off by saying, "Well, shucks, ma'am." I like his cowboy hat. I like his snappy new



Gentle persuasion

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specs. Who says Joe stands in the way of change?

It was probably ever thus in politics, but the federal scene has been a cross between a bloody shoot-out and an Oprah make-over lately.

The goriest fight was that between Canadian Alliance founder Preston Manning and public opinion. It seemed almost no one wanted to see the respected statesman in a singlet. As a result, he was stripped of the leadership of the party he created not once, but twice.

Then there's Day's rigid belief system versus credulity. Oops, did I say that? So maybe old Joe just decided it was time for a Clark versus Day shoot-out. I think he figures the smiley guy's trigger finger is tired.

All this and the credits haven't stopped rolling. There's still another PM4PM in the wings — Paul Martin in a bloodless coup against the apparently sleep-walking Jean Chretien.

Most people think this is the most appropriate political switcheroo to ensure Day doesn't roller blade into the Prime Minister's office when no one's looking.

For sheer entertainment value, though, who

wouldn't like to see the wily old Chretien kick the grin off Day in a run-off, ski-off, or truck lifting event?

All this federal fun leads one to wonder what Milton can expect in its own little showdown this November. Karate-kicking Krantz? Barry Lee whipping across council chambers like Bruce Lee? Cindy Lunau asking challengers to 'bring it on, punk?' A made-over Art Melanson sporting new hair, new glasses and Reebok sandals? My only regret is that the provincial round is over. Think of all the missed photo-ops of Ted Chudleigh in a singlet.

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