



Allan Fotheringham

Dion's fishy faux pas, Marchi's mission and all the buzz on Black

Why do the fans of unfettered capitalism sometimes have a little trouble defending their creed? Ottawa computer tycoon Michael Cowpland sold \$20.5 million of his Corel Corp. shares in August before revealing in September that Corel would show an unexpected third-quarter loss of \$32 million. Cowpland said he didn't know about the third-quarter loss when he sold his shares.

Anyone who thinks Doug Flutie is the finest player in Canadian Football League history has never seen Jackie Parker ... is anyone surprised that the daughter of a celebrity who is stuck with the name of Chastity Bono for the rest of her life is having trouble with her life? ... if you're a betting man, bet the farm that Al Gore will not be the Democratic presidential candidate in 2000. Too long in the shadow...

Stéphane Dion, the Grit cabinet's academic hitman on Quebec separation, was showing so much promise in his devastating and logical open letters to Parti Québécois deputy premier Bernard Landy. Then he reveals the sad insularity of the Ottawa-Montreal compact with his incomprehension that fish could have anything to do with Senator Pat Carney's musing about separation. This is the Ottawa that screwed up the Atlantic fish industry and now doesn't understand the symbolism of the salmon to B.C. Bill Clinton's slogan was, "It's the economy, stupid." Ottawa might learn, "It's the symbolism, stupid." But of course if you eat in the Rideau Club or the Parliamentary Restaurant you are never served cod, or the sock-eye, the finest fish of all.

Trevor Rees-Jones, the Fayed family bodyguard who let a drunk drive Di into that tunnel, now out of hospital says he can't remember a thing about the accident. Yeah, right ... anyone who enjoys hilarity might investigate the London company that, on Oct. 21 in a Toronto theatre, opens a run that each night presents quickie versions of Shakespeare's 37 plays in 97 minutes. Wonderful stuff ... just as Bill Clinton is the disappointment of the decade, Pavel Bure of the Vancouver Canucks is hockey's great disappointment, a genius gone astray ...

Minister for international trade, the cute Sergio Marchi, is taking 150 Canadian women to Washington Nov. 11 to 14 for a Businesswomen's Team Canada International Trade Mission. It's sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada and, inevitably, has been dubbed

Broads Canada.

In the small print, there is this: "The company representative listed hereunder, upon signing this agreement, releases Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, the Minister, Her employees, agents and servants from all liability and do hereby waive as against Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, the Minister, Her employees, agents and servants, all recourse, claims, causes of action of any kind whatsoever in respect of all

personal injuries or property losses which he or she may suffer arising out of or connected with this trade program or activities, notwithstanding that such injuries or property losses may have been caused solely or in part by Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, the Minister, Her employees, agents or servants."

This is an independent country? No wonder the separatists sneer at us.

It was mentioned in this space the other day how Washington, as its supposed head negotiator in the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, had appointed a junior officer, Peter Murphy, who had an inoperable brain tumor. Gordon Ritchie in his new book says Murphy often appeared under heavy medication. After the FTA was signed, Murphy died, at only 46.

The latest Bre-X investigation confirms what has already been printed elsewhere: "David Walsh was too stupid to know what was really going on" ... all the buzz among Canadian scribblers is whether Conrad Black is bluffing or not in his threat to start a fifth Toronto newspaper. New York, three times as big, has recently retreated to just three papers. But Conrad, owning just about all the rest of Canadian papers, needs a national advertising contract. Toronto controls 36% of Canada's national advertising. That is equivalent to the share in the U.S. controlled by New York, Chicago and Los Angeles put together.

Allan Fotheringham is a weekly columnist for Maclean's magazine.

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