

## The lighter side of a campaign

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It has been a serious campaign, but there were memorable moments outside the speeches and debates. A few:

Best mock campaign ad:

*22 Minutes'* version of a Liberal ad: "Stephen Harper wants to give old people a wedgie, then set a brown paper bag filled with dog poop on fire, then leave it on their front porch, ring the door bell, and run away. He said he'd do that. We didn't make that up. Choose Your Canada."

Most obnoxious moment:

During a press conference on a windy Montreal street one very cold morning, NDP Leader Jack Layton takes questions from freezing scribes while standing comfortably in front of two small heaters warming his feet.

Bad injury:

A pick-up hockey game with Jack Layton in Burnaby, B.C., goes horribly wrong when his bus driver, Kenny Guitard, breaks his leg.

Worse injury:

Driving along an icy, mountain highway from his home in Trail, B.C., to visit his campaign manager, Conservative candidate Derek Zeisman is involved in a crash and suffers a broken femur, pelvis, ribs and a collapsed lung. He is pulled out just before the car bursts into flames.

...With insult added:

Zeisman is dumped from the party after it's discovered he'd been charged by Canada Customs in July 2004 with attempting to smuggle into the country a 1989 Mercedes-Benz and 112 containers of alcohol.

Worst Christmas present:

From the RCMP to the Liberals: A Dec. 28 announcement of an investigation into alleged leaks on income-trust tax changes. The Conservatives soon pull ahead in the polls.

Image you'd rather not dwell upon:

"This is like a live grenade has just been thrown down Paul Martin's pants." Frank Graves, president of EKOS Research Associates, describes the RCMP investigation's impact.

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No wonder they love you: "We're all running to get to the federal parliament in Ottawa, for God sake. I'm not running for municipal council here." Star Liberal candidate Michael Ignatieff dismisses complaints he doesn't live in Etobicoke-Lakeshore, where he's running, or that he doesn't know much about the local issues.

With friends like this ...

Stephen Harper's "view of the country is a separatist view," Buzz Hargrove says in Strathroy, Ont. He says Quebec voters should choose the Bloc over the Conservatives. "Anything to stop the Tories." Prime Minister Paul Martin is forced to defend Harper's patriotism.

A dirty trick?

In a local cable TV show, a caller accuses Maurice Vellacott, incumbent MP for Saskatoon-Wanuskewin, of being charged with sexual assault, which Vellacott calls a "lie." The call apparently comes from the campaign office of his Liberal opponent, Chris Axworthy.

Another dirty trick?

The Abbotsford, B.C., Liberal candidate is dropped by the party after being accused of trying to bribe the NDP candidate, Jeffrey Hansen-Carlson, to bow out of the election.

Where's Rondo?

Ajax-Pickering Conservative candidate and evangelical Christian minister Rondo Thomas misses five all-candidates' debates, angering constituents who want to ask him about anti-same sex marriage comments he made on a controversial video.

Clever use of a name:

"Buzz off! Buzz off!" NDP supporters chant at a rally in Toronto, angry at Hargrove for embracing Liberal Leader Paul Martin early in the campaign.

Least funny joke:

Liberal official Mike Klander posts a blog comparing Olivia Chow — NDP candidate in Trinity-Spadina and Jack Layton's wife — to a chow-chow dog.

— *Compiled by Andrew Chung*

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