

MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON THE MP WHO JUST GOT AN OXFORD DEGREE AND RALPH GOODALE AS PM???

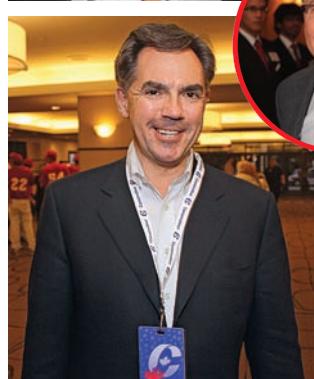
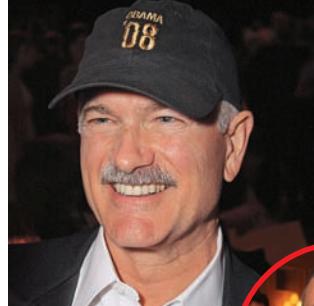
AN EX-HUSBAND. NOW THAT'S SCARY.

On the night before Halloween, Devil's Night, Toronto NDP MP Olivia Chow held a thank-you bash for her re-election campaign volunteers. At the party, Jack Layton noted for the record that he and Chow were now the House of Commons' first "re-elected" married couple. The party theme was "What is scarier than Stephen Harper?" Someone came as Death; one woman dressed up like her ex-husband. The entertainment

was comedy drag queens Donnarama (as Sarah Palin) and Daytona Bitch (as Hillary Clinton) performing a dance mix parody of the infamous Tina Fey *Saturday Night Live* skit. Meanwhile, in Nova Scotia for Halloween, Green Leader Elizabeth May dressed up as professor Minerva McGonagall from the *Harry Potter* series. "I wore my old law gown, plus a lovely wizard hat," says May.

WE WANT RALPH!!!

The inside talk in some opposition MP circles is that the NDP and the Bloc will leave it to the Liberals to prop up the Conservatives once Parliament returns with the hope that a non-confidence vote will pass soon. An NDP insider who has consulted constitutional lawyers says if the government falls within the first nine months, Governor General Michaëlle Jean will have to ask the leader of the Opposition if he can form a government. The NDP and Bloc would not support outgoing Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion as PM. He would have to step down early and they would form a coalition with someone else: top choice is former Liberal finance minister Ralph Goodale, who, if this scenario plays out as this NDP insider sees it, would become PM until the Liberals



SCOTT BRISON (top); (middle left) Michael Chong and his wife, Carrie Davidson; (middle right) Jack Layton in his Obama cap; (bottom left) Olivia Chow with Donnarama as Sarah Palin; (bottom right) Jim Prentice; (insets) Shirley Bassey and Ralph Goodale

picked a new leader. No word yet if the Grits are even interested in this option.

SCOTT BRISON'S SMOKING JACKET

On one side of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, the Cathy Ball was raising money for the Mon Sheong Home for the Aged. Several parliamentarians, such as Liberal Derek Lee, were in

attendance at the popular Chinese community event. Tory MP Michael Chong read greetings from the Prime Minister and ballroom dancers dazzled the crowd. On the other side of the convention centre was Fashion Cares, the glamorous fundraiser for the AIDS Committee of Toronto, hosted this year by Elton John's partner, David Furnish, and featuring singing legend Shirley Bassey. Chong says he and his wife, Carrie Davidson (who used to work for Holt Renfrew), would have liked to attend Fashion Cares if there hadn't been a conflict. As it turned out, only NDP Leader Jack Layton and Olivia Chow hit both events. Chow tossed her formal ball gown into the coat check so she could change into a shorter, shinier outfit for Fashion Cares. Layton kept on his tuxedo jacket with tails and added a Barack Obama 2008 baseball cap. Liberal MP Mario Silva, who has just finished a master's in international law that he has been working on through Oxford University for the past 2½ years, was at the fundraiser as well. He says being in opposition allowed him to complete the degree, and that he is hoping to embark on a Ph.D. Also at Fashion Cares was Grit MP Scott Brison, who says he will not run for the leadership this time around. Brison was dressed for the occasion in a smoking jacket "from my Conservative days."

THE BUZZ ABOUT PRENTICE'S NEW JOB

Much pundit and Hill chatter about whether cabinet minister Jim Prentice's move from Industry to Environment was a demotion. John Baird has said that when he held the position, he never had more public recognition in all his years in politics. And an old internal Conservative poll showed that when Rona Ambrose was environment minister she was the second-most-recognized federal Tory in Canada. (Stephen Harper was the first.) Prentice is often cited as a future Tory leader.

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