

The news these days is like that long crescendo that builds at the end of The Beatles' *Day in the Life*: a number of different story lines playing concurrently and competing with each other. Here's the orchestra:

1.The Mike Duffy Trial - Mr. Duffy's defence lawyer has attempted, with some success, to portray the Senate's rules on expenses, particularly the housing allowance, as being vague and open to a variety of interpretations. Two factors stood out. First, Mr. Duffy was on record as asking PM Harper to make him a senator from Ontario, not PEI, and Mr. Harper refused. Secondly, it has emerged that both the PM and Nigel Wright might not have believed that Mr. Duffy broke any rules, but wanted him to pay back the expenses to avoid 'the optics' of the situation. One can see that someone with Mr. Duffy's background would be greatly offended if forced to admit to a breach of ethics he honestly believed he hadn't committed. The revenge factor now will be interesting to watch.

2.The Federal Budget - Taxpayers took a \$3+ billion bath on the sales of GM stock the federal government purchased to prop up the company back in 2008/2009. While the Finance Minister says this move was not intended to help the Tories balance that budget we haven't seen yet, the claim has not passed the sniff test. Nor has Mr. Oliver's move to introduce balanced budget legislation in an attempt to school the Liberals on long-ago deficits from the Pierre Trudeau era. It will be interesting to see the public's reaction to the taxpayer-funded ad campaign the Tories play to roll out during the hockey playoffs.

3.Bill C-51 - Now the news focus is on the falling support for the legislation across the political spectrum. The Liberals continue to be challenged on their support for the Bill, while it comes as a surprise, even to NDP supporters, that their party would not rescind the Bill if elected, but amend it much along the same lines as the Liberals propose. Support is also fading for our military involvement now that attacks in Syria are taking place. Recent stories that Syria's Assad regime has been cooperating with ISIS further complicates a tangled situation where the bad guys and the good guys are hard to identify.

4.The Economy - Manufacturing jobs took another hit as Canada's workforce continues to shift to lower-paying, less secure jobs in the service sector or self-employment. A CIBC report details the damages.

5.The Polls - The 'bump' that the Conservatives enjoyed in recent months seem to be fading, and while the NDP surge has been notable, the Liberals are seen to be making large gains in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia.

6.The Oil Spill - It's a local angle to a national story: the ongoing cuts to the Coast Guard and the ongoing gutting of safety regulations and enforcement are coming home to roost with the oil spill in English Bay. Both Premier Clark and

Mayor Robertson were critical of the Coast Guard's response and pointed to the closure of the Kits station as contributing to the severity of the incident. The Tories continue to refuse to re-open the station and are doubling-down with the planned closure of a west coast communication centre. Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau has pledged to re-open the Kits Coast Guard facility.

The side show now going on in Alberta will be worth watching. First, if the polls are correct, the Progressive Conservatives are in trouble for the first time in one (or two?) generations and, of all things, the NDP are showing strongly. The PC's seem to be abandoning some of the free-market, 'trickle-down' economics that their federal cousins continue to promote. Albertans' reaction to higher taxes will be interesting. But the second aspect of the Alberta provincial election to keep an eye on is the performance of the pollsters themselves, following some rather spectacular failures to predict election outcomes in recent years. If they're wrong again, we'll need to look for other indices to get a fix on the direction of the federal campaign.

Nanos: <http://www.nanosresearch.com/library/polls/Nanos%20Political%20Index%202015-04-03E.pdf>

Ekos: <http://www.ekospolitics.com/index.php/2015/04/liberals-rebound-in-quebec-as-harpers-emotional-connections-with-voters-weaken/>

Forum: <http://poll.forumresearch.com/post/256/most-see-bill-having-negative-effect-on-their-lives/>

Our messages to the public:

Liberals focused on jobs and growth for middle class

Stephen Harper's priority is a \$2 billion dollar tax break for the rich, of which 85 percent of Canadians will never see a dime.

Liberals are committed to cancelling Mr. Harper's unfair tax break. We will use this money to help the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Mr. Trudeau's priority is clear: we must strengthen those at the heart of our economy, middle class Canadians, who have not had a decent raise in 30 years. Canadian families deserve a real and fair chance at success.

On balanced budget legislation:

This week, Finance Minister Joe Oliver announced that the Conservatives will soon introduce legislation requiring the federal government table balanced budgets.

Under Mr. Harper, Canadians have faced seven years of budget deficits, rising debt and unemployment, stagnant incomes, and weak economic growth.

The Conservatives' hypocrisy of proposing balanced budget legislation betrays the truth: middle class Canadians need a new economic plan and leadership.

Items of interest from the news and the party:

-The Tories hold to the notion that closing the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station is in keeping with his government's emphasis on public safety:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/harper-defends-closure-of-bc-coast-guard-base/article8414600/>

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/coast-guard-budget-cuts-roil-the-water-in-bc-oil-spill-controversy/article23893361/>

-Ontario polls signal a shift to the Liberals:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/federal-liberals-poised-to-make-great-election-gains-in-ontario-poll-finds/article23892369/>

-and so do the Quebec polls:

<http://www.ipolitics.ca/2015/04/10/the-ekos-poll-harper-slides-liberals-surge-in-quebec/>

-But can we really trust the polls?

http://thetyee.ca/News/2015/04/07/Should-We-Trust-Election-Polls/?utm_source=daily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=070415

-Our Ralph Goodale follows the money to question the Conservatives claim to champion public safety:

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/ralph-goodale/harper-public-safety_b_7036340.html

-Press Progress believes the Tories are living in an alternate universe on Canada's economy

<http://www.pressprogress.ca/en/post/how-conservatives-imagine-canadas-economy-completely-odds-reality>

Looking ahead: -- BC Events below -- for details on all scheduled events, click the 'Events' tab here: <https://www.liberal.ca/get-involved/>

April 13

§ An evening with Hon. John McCallum & Terry Beech in Burnaby

§ Calling for Change in Vancouver Granville, Vancouver South (east) and Vancouver Quadra

§ Change on the Doorstep in Salmon Arm

April 14

§ Change on the Doorstep in Chilliwack and Kelowna

§ Calling for Change in Vancouver South (west) and Vancouver Granville

April 15

§ Wonderful Wednesday with Hon. John McCallum in Vancouver

§ Pints & Politics in Nanaimo and Coquitlam

§ Change on the Doorstep in Chilliwack, Kelowna Lake Country and Kamloops

§ Calling for Change in Vancouver-Granville (northeast and Oakridge)

§ Team Trudeau House Meeting in West Vancouver and Burnaby

April 16

§ Change on the Doorstep in Kelowna Lake Country, North Vancouver (Lynn Valley), Vancouver South (west) and Vancouver Granville (Oakridge and Fairview)

§ Calling for Change in North Vancouver

§ Pints & Politics in Port Alberni

§ Meet Pam Goldsmith-Jones in West Vancouver

§ An evening with Hon. John McCallum and Adam Pankratz in Burnaby

April 17

§ Pints & Politics in Kelowna

April 18

§ Change on the Doorstep in Vancouver Granville (Northeast), Vancouver South (east) and in North Okanagan-Shuswap (Vernon)

§ Coffee Meeting in Parksville

April 19

§ Sunday Brunch with Louis De Jaeger, candidate for Chilliwack-Hope, in Chilliwack

§ Change on the Doorstep in North Vancouver, Central Okanagan-Similkameen-Nicola

§ Team Trudeau House Meeting in Vancouver Granville (northwest)

§ Calling For Change in Vancouver Granville (Fairview)

§ Annual General Meeting in North Island-Powell River (Black Creek)

§ Candidate Selection Meeting in Delta

§ Team Trudeau Outreach - Coffee meeting in Nanaimo-Ladysmith (Gabriola Island)

Finally:

Keep up to date on the activities of the major ABC groups:

- [C.R.U.S.H.](#)
- [Council of Canadians](#)
- [Canadians Deserve Better](#)
- [Operation Maple](#)
- [Lead Now](#)
- [Anything But Conservative in 2015](#)