

No alternative

New Democratic Party leader Jack Layton must be feeling good about the election campaign his party has run so far.

Fresh off the two televised debates where Layton, by most reviews, performed rather well, he received more good news early this week when polls showed his party was gaining ground, mostly at the expense of the Liberals.

However, one look at the riding of Wellington-Halton Hills would surely take the air out of his "we offer an alternative" balloon.

First, it wasn't until Sunday, April 3—a full **eight days** after Parliament was dissolved—that the NDP announced Anastasia Zavarella would be their candidate for Wellington-Halton Hills.

Actually "announced" would be inaccurate. It took several calls and emails to party officials to determine who their candidate was. A published report in a Wellington newspaper in the last week of March quoted longtime NDP candidate Noel Duignan saying he was ready to carry the party's colours.

Out of the blue came Ms. Zavarella, a 24-year-old Guelph resident who has a BA in political science and works as Guelph University's Central Student Association Local Affairs Commissioner.

When finally contacted by this newspaper she was unclear of where the nomination meeting even took place—a poorly attended event by her account—before finally narrowing it down to the Acton library.

When asked by our reporter how much campaigning she planned to do in Halton Hills she made it clear door-knocking wasn't going to be a priority for her (too busy?). She hasn't even managed to provide local media outlets a photo of herself, a bio—anything—in the 16 days she has been a candidate.

This past Friday, the first major all-candidates meeting was held at the Gellert Centre and the elusive Ms. Zavarella was a no-show citing a previous speaking engagement.

One can't help but wonder if the New Democrats are simply "mailing it in" in our riding. So much for offering an 'alternative'.

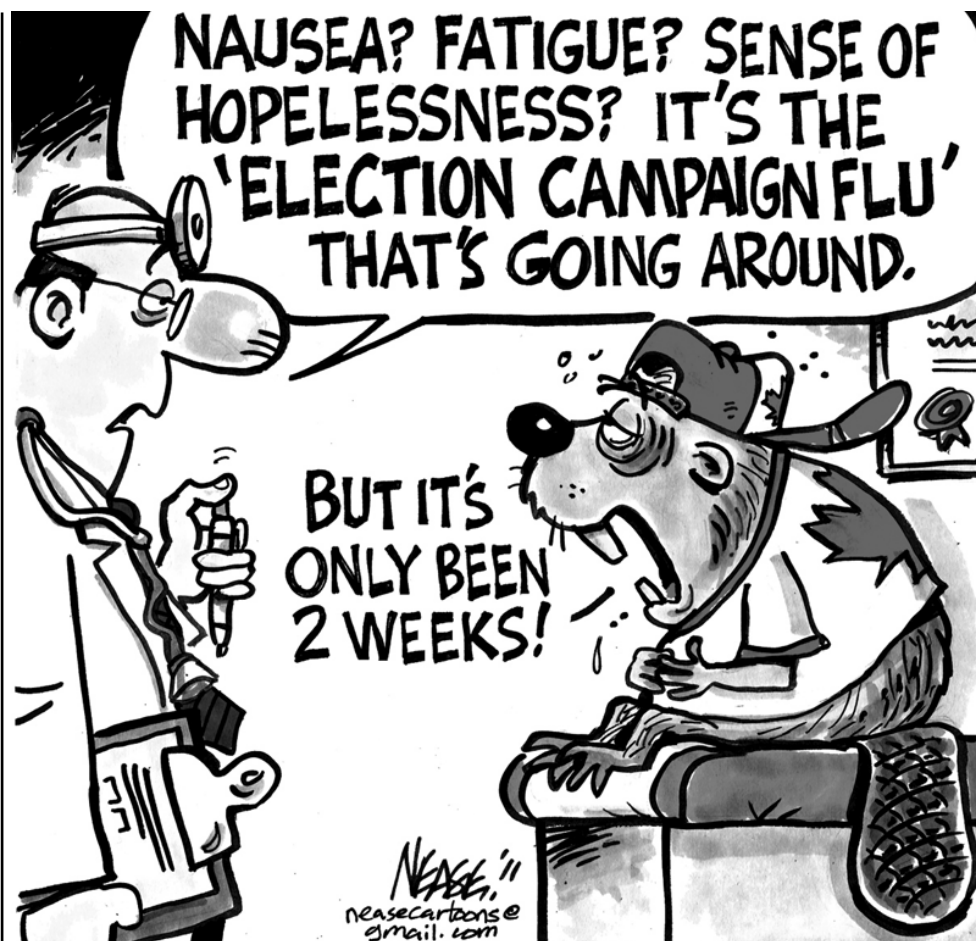
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WEB POLL RESULTS

Overall, who do you think faired the best in the two federal leadership debates?

1. Stephen Harper (52%)
2. Michael Ignatieff (24%)
3. Gilles Duceppe (6%)
4. Jack Layton (18%)

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Letters to the editor

Liberals carefully managed finances

Dear editor,
 Re: Peter Jonkman's April 14 letter,
Chong gets his vote.

In this day and age one cannot afford to be a dyed-in-the-wool Liberal or Conservative. In fact, history shows that Ontario is best off with a Conservative government and Canada with a Liberal one.

I take great offence to Mr. Jonkman's belittlement of the federal Liberals' fiscal achievements while Paul Martin was minister of finance. The previous Conservative government increased our debt to a crippling level due to poor management. As a result, the Liberals, (with Paul Martin as finance minister) had to make some very hard decisions.

Canada was becoming labeled as a Third World country, our credit rating was being lowered and past overspending was crippling our economy. Yes, transfer payments were cut, but so were a record number of federal civil servants as well as many other real and effective cost-cutting measures. Small measures would have only prolonged the agony. The provinces then in turn cut support for municipalities. In the end although this was harsh it did

force improved fiscal responsibility on all accounts.

The Liberals carefully managed the finances by purposely underestimating the surplus every year so that it would go to debt repayment. They posted 10 years of surpluses, bringing our debt down considerably. Without this we would have suffered greatly in the recent downturn.

The federal Conservatives glad-handed GST tax cuts earned on the back of the previous government and have erased 10 years of budget surpluses with their overspending. Stephen Harper has simply stood for what is good for him, has been ego-driven, dictatorial and will do anything to stay in power. Yes, Michael Chong has principles, but his party is leading us into a financial disaster.

Andy Abrahamse, Georgetown

Tory foes sought election

Dear editor,
 There has been some debate about who caused this election (i.e. April 7 letter *Tories forced election*).

It is obvious to me it was caused by the opposition leaders, who blame Mr. Harper. They were the ones who decided to bring down the government.

If they believed that Mr. Harper wanted this election, then all they

needed to do to prevent Mr. Harper getting his own way, was to withdraw their vote of non-confidence, and support the budget. Even before the contents of the budget were released they declared that they would vote against it. How open-minded was that?

What would have happened if the budget had contained everything they wanted? They would have looked like a right bunch of turkeys.

Terry Brown, Georgetown

Lions offer thanks

Dear editor,
 The Lions Club of Georgetown would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who came out to our second annual Community Breakfast Food Drive in support of the Georgetown Bread Basket.

Once again, the generosity of our community was overwhelming. The Lions served more than 400 breakfasts, collecting approximately 3,000 lbs. of food and more than \$1,400 for the Georgetown Bread Basket.

A special thank you to *The Independent & Free Press*, Tim Hortons, McDonald's Restaurant, The Carpet Barn, Freshco, Pete's Meats, TV Cogeco, Direct Hit Apparel and The St. George Pub for their valued support.

*Linda Dilks,
 The Lion's Club of Georgetown*