

Editorial ? Two parties heading in two directions

Both the federal Liberal and New Democratic Parties held major functions over the weekend.

The NDP had a policy convention, and one of the developments coming out of it is a move away from the use of the word socialism.

They evidently are trying to make their brand more appealing to a broader segment of the electorate. But we don't think it's going to work that way. Without its socialist base in its platform, we suspect the party is going to see its left-leaning supporters, on which it has always depended, taking their leave and looking for another party to back.

We can understand what the party has in mind. In light of the success they had in the 2011 election, we can see them licking their proverbial chops, getting ready to replace the Conservatives at the top of the heap.

We doubt it will work out that way.

The fact that the NDP did so well in the last campaign was not the result of Canadians starting to embrace their message. There were a number of factors involved, and we believe the two biggest were the remarkably inspired performance from the late Jack Layton, and the remarkably flat performance from Michael Ignatieff.

Is Thomas Mulcair another Jack Layton? We suspect not, but it is true that it sometimes takes an election campaign or two for a leader to show what he or she has got, or has not got. Stephen Harper lost his first election as leader.

But we think it's realistic to expect that what happened two years ago was something of a fluke, and that the NDP are about to return to their time-honoured status of being the Third Party in the House of Commons.

We say that partly because the Liberals spent their weekend electing themselves a new leader, namely Justin Trudeau.

It's far too early to tell if he has what it takes to be prime minister, but look for a much stronger Liberal presence in the next election, expected in 2015.

The party is going to be much more united than it was the last time because they have a leader most of whose members are ready to get behind. Trudeau got a little more than 80 per cent of the weekend vote, and that shows he's got a lot of backing.

Look for the Liberals to pass the NDP in the next election.

There have been a number of commentators who question whether Trudeau is qualified for the job.

Some day, someone is going to have to tell up just what the qualifications are in order to be prime minister. Academic credentials and a sound work record look great on paper, but they don't necessarily add up to votes, and they are no guarantee of terrific government. Ignatieff had credentials coming out of his ears, and they got him nowhere. Ronald Reagan had little more to offer than a so-so movie career, and he's been getting favourable reaction from the public and historians ever since.

Having the NDP stray from their traditional socialist roots will do them no good in the long run. It's a different story for the Liberals with Trudeau running things.

Lifetree to explore how to spot a liar

Practical ways to tell if someone is telling the truth will be explored at Lifetree Café this coming Wednesday (April 24).

The program, entitled How to Spot a Liar: Secrets From a Former FBI Agent, will feature an exclusive filmed interview with FBI counterintelligence officer John Schafer.

Lifetree Café is at 6025 Old Church Rd. in Caledon East, in the café space in St James Church.

As a behavioral analyst for the FBI's National Security Division, Schafer developed deception-detection techniques that are now widely used by intelligence and law enforcement agencies. In his interview, Schafer shares key indicators that signal when someone is lying.

There are certain signs verbal and nonverbal that indicate lying, says Schafer. If you lie to me, I'll catch you.

Admission to this hour-long event is free. Snacks and beverages are available.

Lifetree Café is a place where people gather for conversation about life and faith in a casual coffeehouse-type setting. Questions about Lifetree may be directed to Bruce Neville at 416-579-9977 or Desiree Neville at 416-579-6748.