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hours
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► **PEOPLE IN THE NEWS**

Eva's a hottie



Maxim loves Longoria but the sultry star says Angelina Jolie is a sexier lady.
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► **CANADA**

Making threats



A former Liberal organizer talks about threats and fears for his safety.
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Zesty snacks



Asparagus has a unique, delicate flavour and even cooks quickly too.
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Gloomy days for Grits

Liberals want to put their future on the line with confidence vote May 19: **Full story, P. 3**



Emotional goodbye

- Kristin Bradford, 24 hours

Imam Zijad Delic gave prayers at a memorial service for Afghan singer Nasrat Parsa who died after a violent altercation on the weekend. Hundreds of mourners filled the Richmond Jami'a Mosque yesterday to honour the singer, whose remains will be sent to Germany later this week. Full story on page 3.

TO THE BITTER END

Libs launch into attack mode

With the NDP creeping up in opinion polls and less than a week before the election, the B.C. Liberals are getting aggressive as they attempt to protect their lead.

Liberal TV ads have gone from docile, picturesque scenes of B.C.'s landscape with a calm, collected voiceover describing B.C.'s economic success to black-and-white images of headlines slamming the NDP.

The ad, targeting fears the N ("negative") D ("destructive") P (pessimistic) is still closely connected to labour unions, first appeared on TV screens across the province earlier this week.

The NDP, on the other hand, have attacked the Liberal record from the start.

The aggressive ads aren't changing their game plan.

They're calling the Liberal's new attacks "shameful and deliberately misleading."

"I think we've seen a lot of desperate tactics from the Liberals, (but) they're missing the point that voters are concerned about the record of this government," Gerry Scott, director of BC NDP, said in an interview.

Election predictions

www.electionprediction.org BY THE NUMBERS	36	
	21	
	0	
	0	DEMOCRATIC REFORM
	0	OTHER
	22	TOO CLOSE

A poll released this week showed the NDP is closing the gap. They're now within five percentage points of the Liberals, who have enjoyed a six- to eight-point lead since the start of the campaign.

The poll was conducted after the TV debate, but before Monday's radio debate.

And according to political pundit Michael Geoghegan, Campbell is taking a risk with his edgier campaign tactics.

"He's polled much better among male voters than women voters ... (so the ads) have to be seen as attacking the NDP, not Carole James," he said.

The recent shift from a boring, predictable election to a nail-biting race echoes the 1996 election where the Liberals were ahead in the polls on election day, but lost to the NDP by a few seats, said Geoghegan.

"Back in 1972 people were voting for a strong opposition and woke up having elected an NDP government."

And if the Liberals fail to get their supporters out to vote this time around, Geoghegan said "we could wake up with a big political hangover on May 18."

- Robyn Dickens, 24 hours

Proof in da punch-ups

Need proof things are getting heated between the Liberals and the NDP?

Last week on a visit to the main island, Liberal supporters held up NDP Leader Carole James by boxing in her campaign bus with several rental trucks.

And a few concerned citizens created quite the ruckus at a Liberal rally Tuesday night, pushing and shouting until the rally broke up.

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Intruder alert

True to his word, the Green Party candidate Damian Kettlewell brought out Campbell 2.0 to Tuesday night's all-candidate debate on sustainability, to fill the real Gordon Campbell's empty chair. Kettlewell, who is running against Campbell in Vancouver-Point Grey, introduced the Premier's clone last week in response to Liberal apathy towards all-candidates debates.

Get the jump

Not here on General Election Day? People unable to get to voting stations on May 17 can cast an advanced vote, starting tomorrow. Advanced polls will be open from noon to 9 p.m. until Saturday, May 14. Check out www.electionsbc.ca for the advanced polling station in your riding.

Booby prize

Gordon Campbell is up for an award, but he's probably hoping he won't win. Campbell is one of five nominees up for the Canadian Association of Journalists' fifth annual Code of Silence Award, which recognizes the most secretive government agency in Canada. The "winner" will be announced May 14 in Winnipeg.

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Bricks ...

A woman's right to choose is on the table for the Liberals, with at least one candidate saying the issue should be subjected to a referendum, the NDP claims. The party accused Campbell of misleading voters about NDP Leader Carole James' position. James says she would protect a woman's right to choose under a provincial statute.

... Barbs

The Liberal candidate running against Charley Beresford in Oak Bay-Gordon Head said Tuesday that Beresford will continue to campaign at schools, despite complaints from parents. Chong also said Beresford has refused to apologize to parents for canvassing on school property.

Park life interrupted by parking meters

The number of visitors and revenue dollars are down for B.C. parks, and parking meters installed by the B.C. Liberals are to blame, says the Wilderness Committee (WCWC).

The WCWC recently obtained government documents from a Freedom of Information request, and found park visits have gone down by more than one million, and targeted revenues for 2003 were missed by 80 per cent.

"Parking meters were put into parks on the erroneous assumption that parks don't make money for themselves," said Gwen Barlee, WCWC policy director, in an interview yesterday.

"Let's not kill the goose that laid the golden egg," she said. "Get the meters out of the parks now."

But the Liberals disagree, and said the charge by the WCWC is "unfair and wrong."

"It's unfortunate that WCWC is spreading mistruths about our world-class park system," said Liberal New Westminster candidate Joyce Murray. "I don't mind having a discussion on the facts of the funding challenges left to our government by years of NDP under funding."

Since 2003, there have been 41 parking meters installed in B.C. parks.

- Robyn Dickens, 24 hours

CAMPAIGN DIRTY TRICKS

Thievery a sign of election times

Election signs are stirring up more trouble on Vancouver Island, and the Sooke Teacher's Association (STA) is up in arms.

Three out of nine signs put up by the STA, costing about \$80 a pop, have vanished.

STA spokesperson Catherine Alpha said she expects the others will disappear as well.

"We are having our voice silenced by having our message removed," Alpha said.

"It's wrong to target a group be-

cause you don't like what they have to say."

The STA, who is registered as a third party advertiser with Elections B.C., didn't violate any regulations set by the Ministry of Transportation regarding how election signs are positioned, Alpha added.

And while they aren't sure who is stealing the signs, she said the STA suspects a private company hired by the Ministry of Highways might be responsible.

- Robyn Dickens, 24 hours

Identities lost in vagueness

When there are no major differences between the parties, the election becomes based on intangibles like leadership and trust, says a UBC expert.

If people from out of the province were watching the leader's TV debate last week, they wouldn't have known which party was on the left or the right, said Allan Tupper. Expect to hear more NDP catchphrases like "everybody matters".

online poll

Do you think parties' negative campaigns are effective?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Yesterday's question

Do you think polls accurately reflect the views of the public?

- No - 68%
 Yes - 24%
 Don't care - 8%