2013

Sent aghast 17/01/13

(Re: French language laws at a new low) This latest Tongue Trooper tactic is as clear as it is insulting. The separatists want to be as obnoxious and unreasonable as possible so the rest of Canada gives up on La Belligerent Province and says “Good-bye and good riddance.” I have more faith in the civility and intelligence of the people of Quebec and look forward to seeing them saying good riddance to the Parti Quebecois in the next election.

No Minister 18/01/13

“In a statement, the minister says he fully intended for the letter to be sent in his capacity as MP for Whitby-Oshawa. “The wrong letterhead?! Did Jim Flaherty really think the CRTC was unaware of who he is? Nudge, nudge. Wink, wink. Know what I mean?”

PH & WC 23/01/13

Letter writer Alan Simmonds makes a specious argument when he blames Prince Harry’s recent comments for possible increased risk to British soldiers. By that logic Winston Churchill’s ‘We will fight them on the beaches’ speech caused or incited the blitzkrieg.

Noblesse obliged 01/02/13

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled in favour of the property rights of rich lenders and against contract rights of pensioners deprived of much of their savings. So the rich get richer and the poor get screwed...again. Jeff Simpson, please take note, the high court, at least, is not saying ‘make the rich pay.’

C-7 soup, not Mmm Mmm good 03/02/13

Eric Grenier describes mulligan soup Senate which the Upper Chamber might become with Bill C7. A recipe for disaster gives us this foul fare which needs more than adjusted seasoning. It is politically poisonous pottage. Throw the whole thing out and abolish the Senate!
What’s old is new again  04/02/13

More than 150 years ago a major segment of the United States acted like the Utah Sheriffs Association of today. They formed the Confederate States of America. It was the Culture War of the nineteenth century. Lincoln stuck to his guns.

Neighsayers?  11/02/13

There may be naysayers, but I think there is an ironic connection between disparate news stories lately. The beef about horsemeat in the EU comes at a time when the bones of Richard III are discovered. Is this a case of ‘A horse! A horse! My Burger Kingdom for a horse!’?

The scent of a womb man  11/02/13

Perfumes designed to replicate or enhance the scent of a baby? Isn’t that eau de toilette training a tad premature?

Trumped by a joker  11/02/13

I am not surprised Donald Trump believes Bill Maher’s political satire is venom, not humour. Mr. Trump is a prime example of what the Republican Party has become, both venomous and a joke.

Presumed innocent  14/02/13

Letter writer Joe Killoran says ‘in terms of the criminal justice system…’ Senator Patrick Brazeau is ‘innocent’. Actually, the senator is presumed innocent until and unless found otherwise. The public must await due process until such judgment is delivered. But as to membership in a caucus or attendance within the Red Chamber, those judgments are determined within the party and Senate rules.

Horsing around the finish line  20/02/13

Does eating horse meat give you the trots or should it be part of your stable diet? So wondered two letter writers recently. Let’s settle this professionally with statistics garnered from a Gallop Poll.
“ La catastrophe, c'est moi! “  01/03/13

Your editorial blasts EU moves to restrict bankers’ bonuses implying the move lacks ‘economic expertise’. What expertise is that? That of Alan Greenspan or financial mavens and rating agencies promoting selling sub-prime mortgages, at the expense of taxpayers and pension funds? A better depiction of bankers is found in Brian Gable’s cartoon today which could well have been titled “La catastrophe, c'est moi! “

A new, heavier-handed Quebec language regime  02/03/13

Tyranny speaks in many tongues but the message is always the same:’ You have no rights save what I give you. Do as I tell you, or suffer the consequences.’ The PQ want to enact what amounts to cultural bullying. By their acts you shall know them.

TMI  04/03/13

Konrad Yakabuski challenges Big Data wherein gagillions of bits of information fail to predict or prepare us for the future. Perhaps one or two tenets of Eastern philosophy apply here: ‘more is less’ and ‘intelligence is not wisdom’.

Dancing cheek to cheek  08/03/13

Rob Ford accused of groping Sarah Thomson? The mayor is quite capable of making an ass of himself; he has no reason to grab someone else’s ass. Butt reason was never his strong suit.

I guess there wasn’t enough space for the two of them  13/03/13

“Numbers don’t lie... I believe in math “. So said Liberal leadership hopeful, Marc Garneau as he stepped aside with a less-than-ringing endorsement of Justin Trudeau. The former astronaut has more faith in math than he has in the Liberal Party heir apparent whom he obviously thinks lacks gravity. Now that’s ironic.

Harper Canada  23/03/13

Re: Federal agency mistakenly brands country ‘Harper Canada’. One can only hope that, after the next election, the Harper Canada brand becomes brand ex.
The bear necessities  25/03/13

Stephen Harper was the right person to welcome Er Shun and Da Mao on loan from China. But I’m not quite sure how pandas, to quote the PM, “will help us learn more about one another while serving as a reminder of our deepening relationship.’ But maybe the P.M. has greater insight and experience in such matters. After all, he is an old hand at pandering to his base.

Plutocrats live on another planet 26/03/13

RE: Plutocrats – the credibility of capitalism itself is at stake. Plutocrats always praise competitive market systems; but it’s only lip service. Once they gain sufficient wealth and power they do everything they can to kill competition. It’s a jungle out there and the predators and hyenas want to keep it that way. Progressives prefer civilization.

Highballing or lowballing Rob Ford  26/03/13

No one has proven Toronto Mayor Rob Ford was intoxicated at public events this month. He is alleged to have been ‘incoherent or rambling’, but that doesn’t prove a thing. His comments make little sense when he’s cold sober.

Governments are not in the business of being businesses  29/03/13

Letter writer John Morrison seems to think governments should be businesses. They are not, nor should they be. Private enterprise must produce, trade and sell to earn a profit. Governments are entrusted with a collective enterprise to provide for the common good. Private profit motivates business, as it should. Public service motivates government. Each should strive to be better at what it does best.

The Harper Ship of Fools ‘ Why the bicycle riders? ’ 01/04/13

Side skirts and guards on trucks may prevent cyclist deaths and injuries beneath transport trucks. But funding for further testing has been cut off by Transport Canada. The prime mandate of any government is protection of persons and property. Bicycle riders, human rights and the environment seem to lack protection under the Harper Tory government.
No class act  06/04/13

After reading ON TOPIC The endless struggle to define class, I realized that money isn’t everything in the socioeconomic strata. Someone may be fabulously rich and yet have no class whatsoever. Dragon Den’s Kevin O’Leary immediately comes to mind.

A rue awakening  10/04/13

After a 65 year ban, some street venders may offer haute cuisine on Montreal streets. The Orifice of Officious Langue Français may rue that. Anyway, I’ll bet pasta won’t be on the menu.

Who’s immature?  16/04/13

Justin Trudeau raised $1,800 for the Canadian Liver Foundation by stripping off his shirt and he grew a mustache for Movember. A Tory attack ad mocks him as immature for this? Twelve years ago I had my head shaved to raise funds in support children’s cancer programs. I guess that wasn’t very mature of me either. But as a two time cancer survivor, I don’t appreciate such efforts being scoffed at in political attack ads.

Class Dismissed. Board out of tune  18/04/13

Perhaps members of the Toronto District School Board could borrow a DVD copy of Mr. Holland’s Opus or Music of the Heart, just two of the many films that could teach them a lesson about the importance of music programs in our schools. To quote a song from the sixties, ‘When will they ever learn?’

1215 and all that  24/04/13

Re The Politics of Anti-terrorism. The balance between safety and freedom is best assured when government earns the trust of the people. When a government politicizes its response to terrorism, that trust is greatly diminished. Of Stephen Harper one must ask, ‘Would you buy an abused Magna Carta from that man?’

Re: A woman’s eye view of a locker room. The Coach is cornered  04/05/13

Don Cherry wants to protect female reporters because some male athletes act like disgusting jerks. So, a women’s innocent behavior must change to accommodate a man’s bad behavior. The Coach is putting women in a corner of time that should have faded away long ago. Boys will be boys, but at some point they have to grow up.
The right history. Is it true, though. 08/05/13

In his comments about Bob Plamondon’s conservative critique of Pierre Trudeau, Lawrence Martin writes that “…Trudeau alienated wide swaths of the country. At the same time, he had an enchanting impact as well.” That first statement about alienation might well apply to our current Prime Minister. However, I doubt many find Stephen Harper enchanting.

Caught holding the bagman 16/05/13

In the Globe editorial concerning Senator Mike Duffy, you say the PM’s chief of staff, Mr. Wright’s bailout ‘implies special treatment and favours.’ Is that not the very essence of the Senate? That antiquated institution is often and rightly described as ‘a house of hacks, flacks and bagmen.’ Its very existence demands sober, second thought.

Sinecure? Not so sure. 18/05/13

Margaret Wente rightly writes, “A Senate seat is a sinecure for party hacks and others owed for services rendered.” In the mixed up political scandals surrounding the Upper Chamber these days, it is perhaps appropriate to note that the word ‘sinecure’, from the Latin for ‘without a care’, is an anagram for ‘insecure’, the state of mind Senate sitting members ought to be feeling about now.

Yet I thinks he Duff protest too much 19/05/13

Tabatha Southey almost got it right. The Mike Duffy tale being spun by the Tories is akin to other legendary whoppers and unbelievable propositions. But the real Big Foot in the mouth award has to go to Tory MP Pierre Poilievre who says Nigel Wright’s largesse was done to save the taxpayers $90,000. If the PMO really wants to save us money, how about ending those multi-million dollar, blatantly partisan, blue-tinted ads for Canada’s Economic Action Plan for which taxpayers get Ding-ding-di-dinged!

Losing Senators a net benefit 24/05/13

The Senators of Ottawa have been skating on thin ice for some time now. Their losing the payoffs (sic) is long overdue. As you may surmise, I was not referring to the NHL team.
Ford, not a better idea 25/05/13

On Friday I watched the final season of ‘Boss’ on DVD. The award-winning TV drama starring Kelsey Grammer is about the corrupt and sinister dealings of a fictional mayor of Chicago. On Saturday I read the Globe’s investigative report of the Ford family’s connection with illicit drug dealing and Rob Ford’s climb to power in a major Canadian city. Is this the Black Art of politics imitating ‘reality’ TV or vice versa? Emphasis on the word ‘vice’.

Tory Ethics 101 30/05/13

In commenting on how Harper’s Conservative government and Rob Ford’s mayoralty each resemble a thugocracy, letter writer Aidan Manning asks, “The similarities suggest training took place. Will a video soon be on offer? “ Indeed, such a video exists. It’s the TV dramatic series Boss, which explores the corrupt and sinister dealings of a fictional mayor of Chicago.

Turban curbin’ is most disturbin’ 03/06/13

It comes as no surprise that the Quebec Soccer Association hasn’t cottoned up to Sikh players wearing turbans. I suspect that distinctly provincial province might allow turbans, but only those made of pure wool.

Where’s the brief? 04/0513

Some Italian businessmen have dropped their pantaloni to protest higher taxes. Unlike their American Tea Party counterpart, this group is demonstrating the right to bare legs rather than bear arms. As well, they are not concerned about exposing a cover up.

Deny, deny, deny 07/06/13

In Toronto, ‘There is no tape.’ In Ottawa, ‘There is no secret fund.’ In Canada we know wherein the truth lies.

Lovely and Virtuous John Malkovich 10/06/13

Being John Malkovich is something for which he can be proud. He’s a hero with qualities of Love and Virtue.
Revealing décolletage 12/05/13

RE Canadian woman, daughter caught smuggling $59,000 hidden in bras. Did undercover agents arrest them?

Quid pro quo 12/06/13

Is it possible John Baird helped secure the release of two Canadian reporters arrested in Turkey through a quid pro quo deal? CBC’s Sasa Petricic and Derek Stoffel in exchange for former CBC/CTV reporters Pamala Wallin and Mike Duffy.

Holy Harley! 14/06/13

I assume that when hundreds of Harleys enter St. Peter’s Square next Sunday, the riders Pope Francis blesses will not be Hell’s Angels.

Pale in comparison 17/06/13

Regarding lands of Islamic extremism, Sarah Palin says ‘until we have a Commander-in-Chief who knows what he’s doing… I say let Allah sort them out’. That is a historical reference to the massacre of Bezier in 1209 wherein heretic and faithful alike went under the sword. The Commander-in-Chief responsible reportedly ordered his army to kill them all because (quoting the bible) ‘The Lord knoweth them that are His’. The Lord of Darkness knows his own too, Sarah.

Op cit effect 19/06/13

(U.S. Doctors say obesity is a disease) The A.M.A. may be right that their declaration ‘will help change the way the medical community tackles this complex issue…’ But is it likely to change American eating habits? Fat chance!

If he only had a heart? He certainly has some nerve! 22/06/13

Jeffery Simpson writes that Prime Minister Harper and the Conservative Party’s ‘brutal political style is wearing on Canadians’. I, for one, certainly hope they will be stripped of power soon. But I take acception to Simpson’s other damning comment, ‘they and their leader look too much like tin men, brittle on the outside without a heart inside.’ Unfair comparison! Unlike the Tories, the Tin Man in the Land of Oz was squeaky clean.
Heart of the matter  22/06/13

Jeffery Simpson compared the Prime Minister and his Conservatives to an Oz character. But it should be noted that, unlike the Conservatives, the heartless Tin Man was squeaky clean. Unlike the Cowardly Lion, Stephen Harper has got some nerve using abusive attack ads whose straw man tactical approach infuriates many Canadians. To my mind, voting out the Tories is a no-brainer.

Buns for brains  24/06/13

After devouring 413 biscuits at a Red Lobster restaurant, Kevin Shalin’s reputation as a food writer must have ‘had the biscuit’, that is, is broken beyond repair. Revived from a ‘butter coma’, he tweets that his recovery should ‘be quick’. I think he meant Bisquick.

StatsCan’t  26/06/13

The comments and attitude shown by Wayne Smith are eerily reminiscent of those of Stephen Harper and several of this cabinet ministers when responding to criticism. Canada’s chief statistician tells us the long form census is dead, so ‘get over it… (because) that ship has sailed.” That is as arrogant and trite as the tautology ‘It is what it is’, a phrase often used to avoid accountability and transparency.

PfizerED  27/06/13

Re Pfizer’s patent pain over Viagra: The firm’s imminent expiration of patent protection in the U.K. may well lead to market share shrinkage unless they can rise to the challenge and withstand the stiff opposition which surely must come.

Happiness is a red neck  28/06/13

“Canadian law requires that guns be unloaded and locked away when stored. “ Taking unsupervised guns away is protecting lives and the RCMP know their duty even if the PMO does not. Message to Stephen Harper: these are just guns, not your manhood.

‘Sheer’ pants still dog Lululemon 10/07/13

Commenting about on-going issues at Lululemon, business analyst Liz Dunn notes “The sheerness issue remains the top concern particularly for Wunder Unders…” Top concern? Obviously, anyone can see it affects their bottom line.
Radical Sheikh  11/07/13

The Kenyan servant to a Saudi princess signed an agreement with ‘an employment agency’ only to find herself an indentured serf, if not slave. Was the name of that agency Simon Legree & Associates?

Harper’s horse’s assignment, none too swift  13/07/13

Canada’s ambassador to Jordan will be Stephen Harper’s former body guard who is under a cloud of suspicion related to workplace harassment accusations. This is what is called a ‘Caligula’s Horse’ appointment, one which is utterly inappropriate. Ironically, a person under such a cloud may truly reflect the bullyboy attitude of the PMO. But it does not reflect well on Canada.

The Canadian A-list  17/07/13

I wonder at the shock from federal opposition members and political pundits over the PMO’s so-called ‘enemies list’. I would proudly add my name to such an anti-list, an A-list, as it were.

Matthew 7/16 and false profits  18/07/13

The headline read, ‘Tories remove Environment Minister from economic prosperity committee.’ The change was made as the government is ‘focusing solely on “economic prosperity.”’ Mr. Prime Minister, ignore the environment and there will be no wealth. Talk about your false profits! And by their deeds ye shall know them.

Booze Boondoggle  20/07/13

The Feds and their friends in Ottawa can get their liquor from the LCBO at nearly half price! Are they nuts? This dipping into the public purse puts a new meaning on the word ‘dipsomaniac’. I’m sure there will be many boos over this booze boondoggle, but not many cheers.

1812 and all that  26/07/13

Applicants for Canadian citizenship are not forced to take an oath, they are asked to take one. Peter Rosenthal is comparing apples to oranges to find this a discriminatory practice. All citizenship applicants (apples), regardless of religion, political beliefs or race, must take the oath. Those not applying (oranges) need not. By the way, Canada is not a republic and, during the 200 year anniversary of the 1812 war, I resent some American treating us like we are one.
O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth  26/07/13

Re: Dubai pardons Norwegian woman charged with illicit sex after rape complaint. It was a case of 'Don't tell, don't ask.' Don't tell the authorities you've been raped and don't ask for justice. Uhh, pardon me?

Dog-gone spell-checkers  05/08/13

‘Camper attacked by near in Northern Ontario park, dog intervenes to save owner’ read the online headline. A near escape, I guess. But was it God, not dog, who really intervened because mere mortals could not bear an ineffective spell-check?

SPQR (Senate Probe Quite Revealing) 14/08/13

It is appropriate that Senate misdeeds be investigated by the R.C.M.P. After all, both institutions share the same motto, 'Don't get caught!'

The Wrong messages  15/08/13

Marcus Gee suggests a congratulatory visit from the mayor as a way of thanking and encouraging community responses to crime. Given Mayor Ford's appearance at other public events, that might prove more of an insult than incentive.

Open and closed case  16/08/13

I am sure Tzeporah Berman is not surprised that the government of Harper listens to big oil companies but not ordinary Canadians. Many Common Sense Revolutionaries from the Mike Harris cabinet in Ontario now yield power in Ottawa. As a book title in 1997 noted, the Ontario of Mike Harris was Open for Business / Closed to People.

garnish / garnishee slanging match 17/08/13

Re the garnish/garnishee debate, Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines 'garnish' as adornment, but also as a slang term for 'an unauthorized fee' formerly extorted from a new inmate by keeper of an English jail.' On the other hand, 'garnishee' is a verb meaning to take a garnishment, as a debtor's wages, by legal authority. Senator Wallin may find herself in the middle of a political slanging match, but let's hope she will not be the victim of extortion. Nonetheless, she should repay an authorized debt.
Ah, here we prorogue again 19/08/13

On December 22, 2009 the Globe & Mail warned in an editorial: ‘Prorogation, a rumour and a bad precedent’. At the time I said in a letter to the editor that ‘your headline is an anagram for ‘A proud, rogue moron. A part decadent brain’ and noted that either way it works. It still does.

Miranda Wrongs 20/08/13

David Miranda was detained by police in the U.K. because he might have had information which might be used by terrorists. It seems in Britain ‘might’ makes everything all right and ‘Miranda rights’ means the right to remain silent, especially if you’re a whistle-blower or related to a journalist.

Manning unmanned? 22/08/13

Bradley Manning, aka Chelsea, may be seen as traitor or whistle-blowing hero for the leaking of classified documents. But now this would-be transgender transgressor and his/her lawyer have crossed the lines of credulity and entered the realm of Jon Stewart mockery. Manning for not manning up but hiding behind his own self-imagined skirt. Lawyer David Coombs for expecting a presidential pardon for his client.

Unlike any other twerk 28/08/13

OED spokeswoman Katherine Connor Martin says ‘twerk’, defined as a sexually provocative dance move, has been around for about twenty years. A specific derivation is not mentioned, but I imagine the term is an amalgam of ‘twist’ and ‘jerk’, two dance crazes from the mid-1960s. That would go far to explain Miley Cyrus and her recent performance about which many in both the media and social networks found much to unlike.

A red face is more appropriate for this embarrassing complaint 05/09/13

Re: Ojibwa man launches rights challenge against Ottawa football team’s name. Offence is in the victim-eyes of the beholder. Honi soit qui mal y pense.

Ironic or moronic? 05/09/13

Is it not ironic that Ontario Tory Finance Critic, MPP Peter Shurman, is charging us tens of thousands of dollars for his second home while he scrutinizes how our tax dollars are spent? Does he have Senatorial aspirations?
Garnish/ Garnishee redux  06/09/13

Josh Wingrove writes that Senator Pamela Wallin, “could see her wages garnished...” The proper term is ‘garnisheed’; to garnishee means to take a garnishment, as a debtor’s wages, by legal authority. To garnish is (1) to warn, (2) to decorate or embellish. The Senate may be warning Ms. Wallin, but the only thing embellished were her travel claims and one hopes she is not up for any decorations or honours.

#%&!!  11/09/13

I found I could interpret Brian Gable’s: #%&!! political cartoon two ways. Either Justin Trudeau has flashier political plumage than Thomas Mulcair, or the Liberal Leader has taken his party farther out on a limb than his NDP counterpart. Either way, I swear the Tories hope it’s just a flash in the pan or that both the NDP and Liberals become sitting ducks in the next election.

Quebec Charter of the Bare Facts and Stark Reality  11/09/13

Steven Colbert or Jon Stewart should consider doing a sarcastic ‘Those KKKrazy KKKanucks’ segment wherein they suggest a simple and absolute solution to the secular question in La Bellicose Province: Mandatory total nudism by all civil servants in Quebec so they may appear neutral. That approach would raise a few eyebrows, but so has the P.Q.’s proposed Charter of Values.

Orthodoxy Moxie 16/09/13

I had never heard of the ‘Sunday Assembly, the atheist congregation in London’ referred to by Elizabeth Renzetti. But it sounds like the Unitarian Fellowship to which I was a member in my youth. Believers and non-faith holders alike were welcomed as we celebrated the unity of our humanity and shared a commitment to Pax et Caritas. Unlike the Dawkins dogma, there was respect for all and people with faith were not treated as delusional.

Seoul mates?  16/09/13

Korea will soon have an ‘invisible tower’ which, according to the building’s architectural firm, will provide “the “best” tower by having an “anti-tower.” Steven Harper beat them to the punch by boasting the best democracy while, in fact, providing an anti-democracy.
Something completely different  24/09/13

John Cleese of Monty Python fame tells the Globe and Mail that he believes Canada, introverted and insecure, ‘may be the sanest nation there is’. I’m guessing he’s not yet met Toronto Mayor, Rob Ford. And now for something completely different from diffident.

Wente too far in assuming  26/09/13

Margaret Wente may know something the rest of us don’t. But the record shows that, after the third ballot of the 2006 Liberal Leadership race, Bob Rae released his delegates; he did not endorse Stephane Dion. It was Gerard Kennedy who, after losing on the second ballot, threw his support to Dion. Bob Rae may have privately persuaded his delegates to vote one way or another, but he never did so publically.

Canadian? Who to choose and who to eschew  29/09/13

Elizabeth Renzetti asks, ‘Who is Canadian anymore?’ My Canada would always include Joni Mitchell and eschew Conrad Black. Sorry, but that’s just my humble Canadian opinion.

London cheers (?) 01/10/13

There’s been much brou-rah-rah over the London Police ticketing of the University of Western Ontario cheerleading squad. And while the by-law and its enforcement may seem, at first glance, ill-considered or down-right stupid, we must keep in mind the confusion and delirium which might have been caused by such spirited social chaos. Many men confronted by dozens of cheerleaders jubilantly prancing about the streets might well have wondered if they’d died and gone to heaven.

To Rex Murphy on Cross Country Check-up re Denise Chong interview 14/10/13

Did you not read the briefing notes before mocking and misunderstanding the title of Denise Chong’s work, Egg on Mao? The link on the X-Country check-up web site to the TVO Allen Gregg interview clearly states:

"... Egg on Mao, a story of a Chinese dissident who defaced Mao's portrait in Tiananmen Square and faced persecution."

Clearly not a pun, but a serious account of a courageous act. Denise Chong, I note, had the good grace to ignore your faux pas and the egg on your face. The yolk’s on you, Rex. Now there’s your terrible pun.
Glory in the lowest  15/10/13

Mark Kingwell notes that Machiavelli’s The Prince includes a teleological account of power. That is, power-seeking is accountable to a greater glory. Our current Prime Minister is not of that princely mold as his political efforts are for a greater glory which is he, himself. Stephen Harper’s Latin motto could well read, Ego, ergo ego.

Birth of a Notion  16/10/13

Mr. Budlakoti “has an Ontario birth certificate and was issued a Canadian passport.” Yet, the Canadian government wants to render him stateless. We already knew the Harper Tories sometimes resemble the right-wing American Tea Party. Now we find out they’re also as bonkers as the bizarre ‘Birthers’.

Press on McDuff  21/10/13

With the latest twists to the Senate scandal saga, Harper’s Conservatives seem like contortionists as they stab each other in the back while shooting themselves in the foot. Meanwhile they appear to be railroading one another while throwing each other under the bus.

Comment to John Ibbitson’s article, ‘A spurned Mike Duffy intends to rage against the Harper machine’.  22/10/13

The PMO and the Conservative party are political contortionists stabbing themselves in the back while shooting themselves in the foot. Mixing metaphors to the brink, I’d say whether railroaded or pushed under a bus, Harper’s Tories are going nowhere fast but are very much a ‘going’ concern. IMHO. Press on MacDuff!

Mathew 19:24  23/10/13

Reports about the ‘luxury bishop’, now banned from his diocese by Pope Francis, have listed some extravagant personal expenditures. These include a private chapel costing nearly three million euros. I have to wonder how much a resident camel and the eye of a needle would cost
House / Senate tragedy a la Romeo and Juliet ~ Act 3, Scene 1 26/10/13

Harper’s Conservative controlled Senate and House of Commons do not resemble institutions of democratic governance. Their actions seem more like gangland extortion and enforcement with the PMO calling the shots. This is a tragedy wherein the Prime Minister is the plague on both our Houses.

Turn of the screw 30.10.13

Re Australian court denies compensation to bureaucrat for sex injury: Many accidents take place in motel rooms. One should always practice safe sex. The overhead light should have been screwed in properly; at least as properly as the motel's guests.

Head correction for the better 31/10/13

The Globe & Mail news headline read “Toronto Mayor Rob Ford says he has no reason to resign”. May I suggest the next Globe & Mail editorial headline read, “Toronto Mayor Rob Ford has no reason. Resign!”

Shadow-wing 03/11/13

At first, I thought it a typo when I read, ‘the final solar eclipse of 2013 takes on a rare hybrid form.’ The Globe & Mail’s on-line photo from Lebanon had clearly captured a high bird formed in silhouette across the eclipsed sun.

Playing carch-up in hard economic times. 14/11/13

Heinz to close Ontario plant, cut 740 jobs: 50 shades of darkness and 57 kinds of pain.

Explosive videos – Ford & Etna 17/11/13

Did the Globe and Mail on-line mix up two video stories? The clip about Rob Ford’s latest outbursts and the one about Mount Etna’s many eruptions are rather similar; each show fiery subjects, often seen blowing their tops and never seeming to quit.
**Who is more important to remember? 22/11/13**

This Friday, November 22, 2013, marked the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy. On that day writers C.S. Lewis and Aldous Huxley also died. Google chose to commemorate the BBC television series Doctor Who. Who is more important to remember?

**Taken as read 27/11/13**

Letter writer Mark Greenberg believes Canadian electoral laws should include “a residency provision – one that requires all potential MPs to be resident in Canada for at least five consecutive years before running.” He goes on to ask, “How else can an MP know the issues of our country?” I’m sure most Canadian politicos read the Globe and Mail. But how they interpret and react to issues has more to do with ideology than residency.

**Leave the irony and take the cannoli ... Ironic QED 03/12/13**

Sebastian D’Elia, the communications director of the New Jersey-based Italian-American One Voice Coalition (IAOVC), finds a Friends of Canadian Broadcasting ad offensive for stereotyping Italians. The on-line ad implies that Prime Minister Harper is “a Godfather figure who deploys Mafia thugs to silence journalists.” D’Elia, in explaining why his group has gone public rather than trying to reason with the FCB, said “We’re not just going to call them up and say, ‘Look, we’re about to punch you in the face.’ We’re going to punch them in the face first.” Obviously, the IAOVC doesn’t get irony any more than they understand satire.

**Friendly Gestures 10/12/13**

President Obama’s kiss-and-make up gesture to Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff may be a conciliatory sign from the US administration. But the American/Cuban handshake does not signify the finalizing of any deal between the two countries. Still, it’s good to see a change in attitude. George W. Bush was better at making enemies than making friends.

**Judges’ opposition to fining criminals 11/12/13**

The ‘Government of Harper’ has already dismissed, degraded, disabled or ignored: parliament, the diplomatic corps, the UN, scientific evidence, environmental arguments, reliable census data, world opinion, journalists etc., etc. In the case of mandatory fine legislation, an independent judiciary is the target. The legislation is vengeance, medium and message, in true Harper form.
‘...their pointed rounds’ 11/12/13

Re Urban home mail delivery to end. Another salvo directed against cities has been launched by the Harper Tories. Is this what is meant by ‘...their pointed rounds’? In response, a protest bumper sticker campaign is in order. I suggest the following text: STAMP OUT HARPER!

Focus on who will define Canada in 2014 13/12/13

I believe it will be two “who’s” whose efforts may mark the coming year. They are Thomas Mulcair and Justin Trudeau. Prime Minister Harper will continue his efforts to remold the political, economic and cultural reality that is Canada. Only the opposition party leaders can stop the neo-Tory disabling of the federal government. In the past seven years, Leaders of the Opposition have failed to stem the tide of Harper’s ongoing, incremental attack. But time wears down all governments and Tory contradictions and self-inflicted follies mount. Thomas Mulcair appears to be made of sterner stuff than the previous Opposition Leaders. Justin Trudeau’s popularity, especially among women and youth, may likewise prove more delectable and electable than the Liberal Party leaders of the past decade.

Too, too much gibberish 14/12/13

Re Tutu excluded from Mandel’s state funeral. Maybe the ANC organizers sent Archbishop Tutu the invitation via a sign language interpreter.

Who’s who we will watch 14/12/13

Who will dominate the conversation in 2014? It will be Thomas Mulcair and Justin Trudeau. They will confront and oppose Stephen Harper’s ongoing efforts to remold the political, economic and cultural reality of Canada while disabling the federal government. The next election is not slated until 2015 but, to be effective at the polls then, the struggle on all sides must begin now. The success or failure of these two party leaders next year will direct Canada far into the future.

Who’s who in 2014? 17/12/23

Who will dominate the conversation in 2014? It will be Thomas Mulcair and Justin Trudeau. They will confront and oppose Stephen Harper’s ongoing efforts to remold the political, economic and cultural reality of Canada while disabling the federal government. The next election is not slated until 2015 but, to be effective at the polls then, the struggle on all sides must begin now. The success or failure of these two party leaders next year will direct Canada far into the future.
Simpson and Dryden on the same, overlapping page 19/12/13

Seldom have I read two such complementary columns in the Globe and Mail as I did Thursday. Ken Dryden’s analysis/warning about the populist, Tea Party-like appeal of Rob Ford meshes well with Jeff Simpson’s comments about Prime Minister Harper’s tough-on-crime (but soft-on-facts) approach which appeals to his hard core constituency.

Canada should not be ruled by those who benefit by dumbing down Canada. Populist demagoguery does not a healthy democracy make.

Sense and Senate abilities 27/12/13

Preston Manning shifts blame for responsibility for ethical behavior from Canada’s Senate to the Ottawa Press gallery by noting the latter’s limited ethical rules. But he neglects to point out that an all-consuming ethic lies in the very core and raison d’etre of a free press, namely uncovering facts and objectively reporting them. That ethic seems to be the antithesis of the political party practice of covering up inconveniently embarrassing truths for as long as they can. No one expects Senators or M.P.s to be journalists; we just want them to follow some ethical values.