

## BROCK'S BANTER: Ready.

By Brock Weir

20 years from now, I look forward to seeing the historical perspective on just what happened across Canada on Monday night, the historic moment when the third place Federal party surged ahead to topple a decade of Tory rule.

Will it be remembered as a seminal moment in which hope and optimism won the day over fear and a steady diet of negativity doled out to Canadians in doses far above the recommended daily intake highlighted in Canada's Food Guide?

From the perspective of dyed-in-the-wool Liberals, Canada has lost its moral compass on the world stage over the past 10 years. Perhaps this will be remembered as a national decision that it was time to recalibrate.

Or, maybe it will be characterised as the moment Canadians were tired of being told over and over for the better part of two years that a national leader, despite his great head of hair, was just not ready.

The answers to these questions will become far clearer with the passage of time when we see what Prime Minister-elect Justin Trudeau will do with the next four years and, perhaps, beyond ? but one thing is clear: the majority of Canadians felt he is, indeed, ready for the top job and turned out in droves to prove it.

The final week of this Federal campaign in Newmarket-Aurora and Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill provided this writer with a fascinating contrast of the two leading campaigns.

On Friday, Mr. Trudeau was joined by Aurora's new Members of Parliament, Leona Alleslev and Kyle Peterson, at a campaign rally in the north end of Oak Ridges, the second time the Liberal leader had visited either of Aurora's ridings since the writ was dropped in August.

The first time, a campaign announcement in September, was a relatively staid affair in Newmarket, but Friday's rally was a different story. Mr. Trudeau didn't have much to say, but the crush of people there did the talking for him. Hundreds of people showed up to simply shake his hand, have a selfie taken for posterity, and essentially bask in the glow. It was a raucous crowd and I would be lying if I said my shoulders weren't slightly smarting still from being bashed about by some overzealous supporters, but it was effective in underscoring that this was a different sort of campaign.

48 hours later, outgoing Prime Minister Stephen Harper was in Newmarket-Aurora on the final day of the campaign visiting a warehouse at the northern end of the northern riding, along with his wife, Laureen, and local candidates Lois Brown and Peter Van Loan.

In contrast to Mr. Harper's last rally in York Region, this time there was nary a Ford brother in sight, but unlike Mr. Trudeau's whistle-stop this was an invitation-only affair, with some people in attendance telling me they received last minute invitations from as far away as Port Hope to attend the rally.

While waiting for Mr. Harper to arrive, the pump was primed with a loop of some of the more negative Conservative Party advertisements which preached to the enthusiastically and long-since converted, and by the time Mr. Harper arrived, money in the form of twenties, fifties and hundreds were quite literally being thrown around, into the air, and onto a table to illustrate how, from the perspective of the Conservatives, local businesses will suffer under a Liberal government. The display was even punctuated by a ?cha-ching!? soundtrack.

It was a theatrical presentation, and an interesting way to end the campaign, but to someone who has followed this slog from its incubation period, it smacked of desperation and a bit of gothic drama. Case in point: the introduction of Mr. Harper by Ms. Brown began with the ominous statement: ?We live in a dangerous and uncertain world, one that threatens our economy, our prosperity, our jobs and everything that depends on those things: our families and those we love?, and concluded by asking the audience to ?rise? for the Prime Minister rather than letting a standing ovation happen organically in this fiercely partisan audience.

It was a disappointing turn.

Up until this point, I had admired Ms. Brown's campaign for largely staying positive and taking the high road. It was a nice antidote to what was occurring on the national campaign and one I thought had served her well in the fight to retain the Newmarket-Aurora seat.

But, I suppose when it is clear the chips are going down for the party as a whole, I will give Ms. Brown the benefit of the doubt in assuming these words would not have been her first choice in introducing her party leader.

Writing this on Tuesday morning in the election afterglow, I look forward to working with Ms. Alleslev and Mr. Peterson over the next four years, wherever circumstances happen to take our respective ridings. I also look forward to their contributions when they trade off the bi-weekly space we at The Auroran offer our Members of Parliament to communicate with their constituents on the

issues that matter to them, but I am also sparing a thought for Ms. Brown.

Over my years of watching Ms. Brown as Member of Parliament, she has always struck me as an incredibly hard worker willing to go the extra mile to work on behalf of her constituents, even if an issue doesn't perfectly align with the party line. Her passion for helping residents who happened to find themselves in challenging, even perilous situations, was always evident to me, as was her remarkable ability to seemingly be everywhere at any community event asked of her.

Ms. Brown served Newmarket-Aurora well and made a significant contribution to the community and, at the end of the day, I believe she was in this race for all the right reasons. Unfortunately, she, like so many Conservatives, whether running for office or those simply supporting the party, were significantly let down by their leader and the resoundingly disappointing campaign he inflicted upon them.

After all, how could these candidates be asked to dish out the prescribed talking points on prostitution and pot with a straight face when their valiant leader is performing an about-face and swanning around with the moral paragon that is Rob Ford in a final act of desperation?

I truly wish Ms. Brown the best of luck in her future endeavours and look forward to seeing where the next four years will take us as two ridings and one nation.

#### THANK YOU

On a final note, I would like to thank whoever came by our office last Friday while I attended the Trudeau rally to drop off The Sunday Times Magazine picked up on their recent travels to the United Kingdom. The handwritten note was unsigned, unfortunately, but the publication will be greatly appreciated.