

BROCK'S BANTER: Waking Dream

By Brock Weir

For the past couple of weeks, I've been dragging my tail just a little bit. It's the result of that strange phenomena that we all experience at one point or another where you can go to bed feeling on the verge of exhaustion but, as soon as you get into a horizontal position and turn off the light, suddenly all that disappears and you're full of all the vim and vigour you were hoping would arrive at some point in the previous twelve to eighteen hours.

To that end, I've been trying to beat the system, starting the going-to-bed process a bit earlier than normal in an effort to fool the internal clock. It's a futile effort though because although it has had the consequence of making an easier transition to sleep, it is now bringing about the joys of the waking dream for the first little while.

Before you know it, random images are popping into your head with little relation to the last, pictures of events long-since past, or the faces of people whose paths you've crossed even earlier than the pictures. While it is fascinating ? and somewhat exciting ? to see what the brain is going to throw up from one night to the next, it is not necessarily conducive to being one's best self the following morning.

Fortunately, for the purposes of history, I just happened to take a night off from this noble experiment on Wednesday night.

At this juncture, however, I would like to spare a thought for those supporters of the Progressive Conservative party ? dyed in the wool blues or casual supporters eager to get over their Liberal fatigue ? who had the bad luck (or maybe the unrealised foresight) to try to knock off a few extra winks that evening.

Such supporters would have gone to bed sure in the knowledge that in just a few short months they had their best fighting chance yet of re-electing a Progressive Conservative government after more than a decade of Liberal rule.

Everything was clicking just right. Policies introduced by the Liberals were, by and large, not clicking with the general populace who are experiencing pressure in so many other areas, the Premier herself is not exactly setting Ontario on fire as a person, and a general voter apathy appeared to be on the wane as so many people were already prepared to make their decision at the ballot box this spring or early summer.

Then, Twilight Zone syndrome kicked into high gear. I think of the famous episode ?Person or Persons Unknown? where, after a night of hard drinking, the main character of the story wakes up in a very different world; a world where he is not recognized by his friends and family, his commonplace routines are disrupted and, choosing to rail against it, ultimately finds himself locked up for the sake of his own mental health ? only (and this is a spoiler alert) to wake up finding all of that had been a bad dream. Or was it?

And so it was for Progressive Conservatives that evening. So many went to bed with that little extra bit of comfort only to wake up to a party that had, in the ensuing hours, sadly turned into a dumpster fire and those who stayed up through the night were already piecing together the wreckage as they wiped the sleep crust out of their eyes.

What happened?

By now we all know what happened, and it is a sad tale all around, for the brave women at the epicentre of this storm, those looking to rebuild and those disillusioned by the entire situation, but there is plenty of work to do.

The Party has proven themselves over the last few days to be a group of quick workers, picking an interim leader to steer the ship through some unexpectedly rough waters, weighing the pros and cons of how to install a permanent leader to be at the helm through the home stretch of the 2018 election campaign, making that all-important decision, and going straight to the mat in putting together the infrastructure to make that happen.

But as much as that seems like the hard part, I can't help but thinking there will be tougher hurdles ahead.

The Progressive Conservatives have an energized membership base which previous PC slates, and indeed slates of any particular stripe down through time, would envy and it would be a shame not to harness this energy while picking a new leader.

That being said, opening the leadership up to the entire voting base of the Progressive Conservative party does open up the possibility of sweeping in a new leader, potentially one from outside the current crop of MPPs and confirmed candidates, who do not buy into the platform outlined by the now previous leader.

Then what?

An election could be fought on a platform that is being made up on the fly.

Alas, I'm sure that possibility was raised in the heated talks that took place last week, and ultimately to the decision made on Friday evening, so it will be interesting for all Ontarians to watch as it all unfolds.

Contenders for the title have wasted no time throwing their respective hats in the ring to be the man or woman with a pretty great

shot of being Ontario's next Premier.

Doug Ford is out of the gate.

Close to home, Caroline Mulroney, who is the confirmed PC candidate for York Simcoe, has been thrown into the mix followed by the inevitable grassroots organization from another camp with an apparent aversion to 'political dynasties.' Whatever could they be referring to? Does this also apply to the Fords?

Nevertheless, for Progressive Conservatives, now that the decision has been made to open what could be the make or break decision of the 2018 Provincial Election up to the 200,000-strong membership base, it will be vital to weigh all options and pick a leader that not only reflects their values but also their vision for Ontario, a vision that is winnable, and a vision that can be ultimately sold to those undecideds who have never voted PC in their lives, but were willing to hold their nose this time around.

The ultimate question will be down to the party identity itself. Will members choose to stick on the more Progressive track of their party, or will those leaning more towards hard Conservative try to take their party a hard-turn to the right?

Will there be a middle ground?

Time will tell ? and so will all Ontarians in just a few months.