

Tory win looks like a loss

More than 2,000 years after it was fought, the battle of Asculum in present-day Italy is chiefly remembered for one thing. It was so devastating to the Greeks who won it that they eventually lost their war against Rome.

And so the name of the Greek's hapless leader, Pyrrhus, achieved dubious immortality in the phrase "Pyrrhic victory" which describes a seeming triumph that is really a searing defeat.

Patrick Brown may not be an avid student of ancient history, but the Ontario Progressive Conservative leader should check out the story.

On the surface, Tory candidate Sam Oosterhoff's landslide win in one of two provincial byelections Thursday seems something for Brown to celebrate. But look harder and you'll see a Pyrrhic victory and a potential game-loser for the Conservatives. The reason is Oosterhoff himself. It's not his age—he's just 19—that's worrying. The problem with the new MPP for Niagara West-Glanbrook is his thinking.

He's a dyed-in-the-wool social conservative who campaigned on his strong family values, called himself 100 per cent pro-life and voiced opposition to the province's sex-education curriculum. Nor has he said whether he'll vote with his own party to support a Liberal bill that would update the definition of families to recognize the rights of same-sex couples.

With regressive ideas like this, Oosterhoff could be the wrench that falls into the engine of the Conservatives' 2018 provincial election campaign and stops it cold.

After 13 years of delivering soaring hydro bills, deficits and scandals, the governing Liberals are widely loathed. With the passing of each day, their regime increasingly resembles a house of cards that's ready to fall. The Tories may be the top choice of voters in recent polling, but Brown's party has squandered similar leads in the past. As for Brown, he remains an unknown quantity for most Ontarians.

His embarrassing flip-flops on the sex-education issue earlier this year—he first vowed to axe the curriculum then said he backs it—left the public wondering what he stands for. Since then, Brown has worked hard to shed his reputation as a social conservative and rebrand his party as a mainstream, tolerant and fiscally responsible alternative to the Liberals. History records that after the battle of Asculum, Pyrrhus lamented: "If we are victorious in one more battle, we shall be utterly ruined."

As he considers his party's latest byelection win, Patrick Brown might say the same.

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Letters to the editor

Church perfect for Messiah

The St. Elias Church has been rebuilt and The Georgetown Bach Chorale's presentation of the Messiah returned last weekend.

What a perfect setting for Conductor Ronald Greidanus and the Bach Chorale. How fortunate we are to have such talent in our community.

See you next year.

Janice Rumley

Please, watch the nuts

For two weeks, McDonald's is testing the SKOR McFlurry at our local Georgetown and Acton restaurants.

The dessert contains almonds, but unlike other products which come with separately packaged nuts, this will apparently be made

with nuts directly in-store.

There are allergy notices posted at both restaurants advising of this change.

This is a disappointing development for any customer with anaphylaxis, a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction which can occur within minutes of exposure to allergens.

It will be impossible to contain any nut allergens, which will be on tables, chairs, doors, and any surfaces cleaned by staff.

I appreciate that McDonald's has posted notices warning people, but I hope that after the trial period, the company will realize that this is not in the best interests of their customers.

Why, when every other business is moving towards clear labeling and nut-free products and environments, is McDonald's going in the opposite direction?

I really hope that they reconsider.

Alex Vonghia

Whistleblowers need protection

I do believe whistleblowers are important to companies. They're the honest people that make sure the workplace is playing fair and safe.

However, it makes me wonder what companies put more effort into. Do companies focus more on the reward or the protection?

I don't think employees are too worried about money more than their own privacy. Privacy is priceless. Security, protection and trust should be the bigger incentives for whistleblowers.

Whistleblowing should be company wide and extremely confidential in my opinion. Every employee should be given the opportunity to give hints or tips anonymously as if it were their right.

Companies should be more interested in protecting those people who come forward with tips. Instead of giving money to whistleblowers, maybe companies can invest money into their protection?

Linden Lirette