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From: Navigator Limited [info=navltd.com@mail27.atl91.mcsv.net]
on behalf of Navigator Limited [info@navltd.com]
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To: Terry Young [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group
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Subject: Queen's Park Update - June 2, 2017

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Friday, June 2, 2017

In the news

Yesterday, a byelection in Sault Ste. Marie led to the first Ontario Progressive Conservative victory in the riding since 1981. PC Candidate **Ross Romano** took 40.4 per cent of the vote to the NDP's 32.9 per cent. The Liberal candidate came third, receiving only 23.1 per cent of the vote. The byelection was made necessary in December when Liberal cabinet minister **David Orazietti** announced he was stepping down. In the 2014 election, Orazietti carried 60 per cent of the votes for the Liberal Party, with the PCs coming in third. While this election does not change the balance of power in the legislature, the PCs have now won five byelections under leader **Patrick Brown**.

A recent poll conducted by Forum research revealed that the Ontario Liberal Party and Progressive Conservatives are in close competition for Toronto. According to the study, 34 per cent of respondents said they would support the Liberals if the election were held today, while 34 per cent said they would support the PCs and only 25 per cent pledged support to the NDPs. These close numbers align with the trends seen in similar polls. The next provincial election is scheduled for June 7, 2018.

Ontario Premier **Kathleen Wynne** has offered her thoughts on US President **Donald Trump's** decision to quit the Paris climate change accord. She characterizes Trump's decision as appalling, while arguing the entire world needs to be involved in the fight against climate change. Premier Wynne is travelling to Washington, D.C. on Tuesday to press the need for action on climate change.

MPP in Kitchener-Conestoga **Michael Harris** has proposed legislation that would only allow pharmacists and a handful of other authorized users to possess pill presses. The proposed legislation is to reduce the use of opioids in Ontario, as pill pressing machines produce pills containing substances such as fentanyl that are indistinguishable from prescription medication. These machines have the capacity to make as many as 15,000 pills an hour.

President and CEO of the Business Council of Canada **John Manley** has identified the Ontario government's labour reforms, including a minimum wage increase from \$11.40 to \$15 per hour, as a hurdle for businesses to overcome. Manley criticized the government for failing to provide evidence-based policy, arguing that they are simply trying to win votes.

In other news, Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan, Anti-Racism Bill, Child, and Youth and Family Services Act were among several pieces of legislation passed yesterday. The recently announced

workplace reform bill also passed its first reading in the legislature. Yesterday marked the adjournment of the legislature for summer break.

Opinion Highlights

- Minimum wage hike doesn't go far enough. (Peter Epp, The Nugget)
 - Spat between Toronto mayor and Wynne government highlights infrastructure spending logjam. (John Invison, National Post)
 - Ontario's budget a house of cards. (Editorial Board, Toronto Sun)
 - In defence of the giant duck. (David Reevely, Toronto Sun)
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Insights | For Patrick Brown, a momentum boost worth more than the seat itself

By Lanny Cardow

In his typically unassuming way, Patrick Brown quietly made history in Northern Ontario last night. Under his leadership, PC Candidate Ross Romano won the riding of Sault Ste. Marie with 40.4 per cent of the vote, versus 32.9 per cent for the NDP, and just 23.1 per cent for the incumbent Liberals. The riding had been held by former Liberal cabinet minister David Orazietti since 2003. Orazietti announced in December he would step down, prompting the byelection. It was the first PC win in Sault Ste. Marie since 1981 -- when Ross Romano was only a toddler.

Byelections are typically seen as referendums on the sitting government. To illustrate the kind of message this particular referendum sends, consider this: the two non-Liberal parties combined took an incredible three quarters of the vote. Message received, loud and clear.

Winning Sault Ste. Marie a year before the election doesn't change the election map all that much: the Wynne Liberals continue to hold a majority, and they will until the writ drops.

But it makes a huge difference in momentum.

The message it sends to the PC Party's approximately 60 nominated candidates is clear: the PCs will treat just about every riding as though it is in play. That's energizing for candidate morale. Traditionally-tough 'bubble' ridings like those in Brampton, Etobicoke, and suburban Ottawa come into the picture when the PCs perform above trend like this.

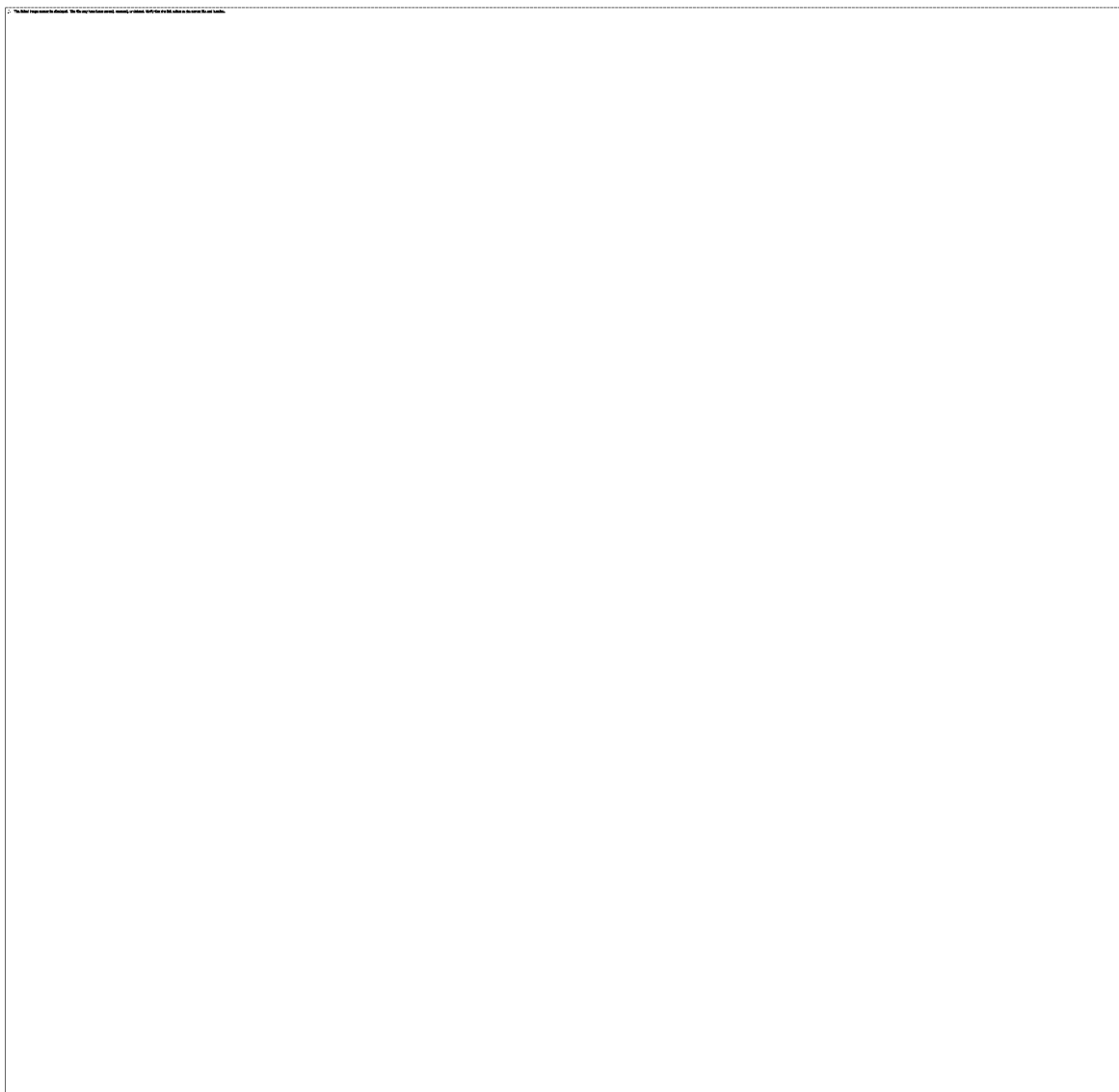
Success also draws in helping hands. With thirteen defeated federal campaign teams now shedding competent, highly skilled staff, there is a great opportunity for Patrick Brown and his the party to pick up skilled campaign veterans. With a potential win looming just a year away, lots of motivated talent is ready to help.

Like it or not, the media has to start acknowledging that Patrick Brown is a winner. He has now won five byelections over the Liberals, including improbable wins like Sault Ste. Marie and Scarborough—Rouge River. He continues to be underestimated, and perhaps he likes it that way: without sky-high expectations, his focus is on preparing for 2018.

Perhaps it will be hard for Romano and Brown to hold Sault Ste. Marie in the next general election. While incumbency certainly has big advantages, the PCs averaged just 10.5% of the vote from 2007-2014. That's a big gap to erase with one byelection. But, undeniably, it has given big momentum to Patrick Brown and the PCs for now.

Lanny Cardow is a Principal at Navigator Ltd.

Social Media Snapshot



Events at a Glance

Monday, June 5, 2017

Education Minister Mitzie Hunter will address the Economic Club of Canada.

Time: 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Location: InterContinental Hotel, 225 Front Street West, Toronto

RSVP: <http://economicclub.ca/events/display/the-hon-mitzie-hunter-to-address-the->

economic-club-of-canada

Thursday, June 8, 2017

OEA Conversations that Matter: Energy Planning Governance Reform

Time: 7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Location: Offices of McMillan LLP, 181 Bay Street, 44th FL, Toronto

RSVP: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/oea-conversations-that-matter-energy-planning-governance-reform-tickets-339268260507>

Queen's Park Schedule

The legislature will rise for summer break, and return on Monday, September 11, 2017.

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Our mailing address is:

Navigator Ltd.
121 King Street West, Suite 1810
Box 100
Toronto, Ontario M5H 3T9
Canada

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