

## Territorial hissing



**By Nate Smelle**

As nearly every federal election in Canada proves, what happens in the United States of America does not stay in the United States of America. That is why?and I'm speaking to the handful of you who wrote in response to my recent column in The Bancroft Times entitled 'Smells like team spirit'? I will not be taking your advice to ignore the destructive influence of wannabe dictators like former U.S. president Donald Trump and the delusional cults that prop them up and give them power.

When Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made the wise decision to call a snap election in August 2021, he was able to avoid the rising wave of anti-democratic hatred that had been rolling northward since Trump directed his MAGA mob to march on the U.S. Capitol and 'fight like hell' on Jan. 6, 2021.

Although Trudeau's Liberal government lost seats in that election, having seen the birth of the 'Maple MAGA' movement coming, they were able to prevent a Conservative Party that was rapidly drifting to the far right from seizing power.

After this wave crested in early February 2022?coming to a head with the made in Canada, copycat coup modelled on the failed MAGA insurrection roughly a year earlier?the Conservative Party of Canada still decided to jump on the Trump bandwagon by tossing aside its more moderate leader Erin O'Toole, and electing a leader that is completely comfortable with alternative facts, racist far right conspiracy theories, and the ultra-divisive style of politics that put Trump into office in 2016.

Looking back, when Pierre Poilievre was elected as the Conservatives' next leader, it marked a turning point for the party that my grandparents, and quite possibly yours, once proudly supported.

Setting aside Poilievre's almost page-by-page, letter-by-letter implementation of Trump's divide and conquer with lies playbook, Canadians caught an early glimpse of the recently elected leader's true character in how he took out one of his top contenders in the leadership race, former Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario leader, Patrick Brown. Rather than allowing his fellow Conservatives to make an honest decision regarding who they wanted to lead them into the next election, Poilievre and his team opted to play dirty by paying for the legal fees of one of Brown's volunteers who alleged that he had violated the financial provisions of the Canadian Elections Act. As a result of these allegations, Brown was disqualified and Poilievre took the reins.

Ruthless, cut-throat, dishonest, there are many words to describe Poilievre's style of politics. While all of these words accurately portray his character, there is one that I personally find most fitting: Trumpian.

Now, as the swift demise of Donald Trump and the MAGA movement plays out before our eyes south of the border, we would be wise to pay very close attention to the final hissing of this not-so-slick snake oil salesman. In the beginning, Trump's somewhat eccentric persona as a self-proclaimed billionaire was alluring to many American voters who just wanted a leader that was not a traditionally polished politician promising more of the same. The Democrats had a chance in 2016 to prevent the harsh realities that arose during the Trump administration, however, instead of throwing their full weight behind their own anti-establishment candidate Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, they abandoned the massive amount of momentum building up behind him and elected former U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton as the Party's leader. A true 'status quo' candidate. In turn, as we all know far too well, the Democrats failure to see the writing on the wall resulted in four painful years of a criminal Commander-in-Chief occupying the highest office in the so called 'Free World.'

For anyone who is still betting on the washed up reality star and former president's corrupt approach to politics working out in Canada, be warned; as history has shown, there is no fairytale ending in the cards for fascist politicians.

Still not convinced? Just watch some of Trump's speeches since U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris unofficially became the Democratic candidate on July 21. Make sure to crank the volume up real loud; and, more importantly, to listen very carefully to the substance, or more aptly, the lack thereof, in what 'The Donald' is actually offering the American people.

What you will find is that although these 'very fine' articulations of the Republicans 'best' candidate for the job might sound a little funny?say when he delivers a five-minute long rambling speech about how he doesn't ramble?when you look beyond his clown-like attitude and make up, the hateful energy motivating Trump and his MAGA cult is in no way a laughing matter. In the past few days alone, we have witnessed his ever-increasingly unhinged behaviour manifest into personal attacks against Vice President Harris's looks and laugh; we have seen him take to social media to announce his fraudulent acceptance of a bogus endorsement by pop star Taylor Swift; and, even seen him bully outgoing President Joe Biden because of his stutter.

Is this the type of person we consider to be among our best?

Is this the behaviour of a true leader? Or, is it more fitting of an immature buffoon who knows deep down his time is up?

As his numbers continue to plummet in the polls, Trump's antics will most certainly become even more weird and creepy. But his desperation, though comical at times, is also a sign that he is becoming more dangerous. Make no mistake, like a cornered wild animal, if approached without caution he can still do a lot of damage to democracy on his way out.

As is the case with all aspiring tyrants, his political career must come to an end immediately for the good of humanity and the planet. Fortunately, as we are noticing now, in the growing number of empty seats at his rallies, people inevitably become bored with the type of divisive rhetoric and politics of hate he has been selling since 2015.

If the Conservative Party of Canada actually intends to try and get elected in 2025, they would be wise to heed this warning, and drop their Maple MAGA routine. Most importantly, they need to start acting like Canadians again. If the rise and fall of Donald Trump and the MAGA cult teaches us anything in the end, it will be that the majority of people, when given the chance, will always choose joy over hate, and truth instead of lies.