

OPINION

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FEDERAL POLITICS

May will stay, but Trudeau? It's time



ALTHIA RAJ
OPINION

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May says it's "obvious" Justin Trudeau should "pass the torch," and if she were in the Liberal party she'd be pulling him aside saying, "prime minister, with all due respect, don't you think it's time?"

Following a news conference Tuesday, where May's unofficial co-leader, Jonathan Pedneault, resigned, the longtime head of the Green Party was confronted by questions about her own leadership. But she dismissed a complaint she isn't making room for the next generation. She suggests she'll pick her heir, and will guide the party into the next campaign — her fifth in 15 years.

"(Trudeau) is hated in ways that I think are unfair," May told the *Toronto Star* Tuesday, comparing the prime minister to U.S. President Joe Biden, whom she also thinks should step aside. "It's different in that there's no sense of Justin Trudeau having cognitive difficulties, but I mean, there's a moment where you realize — and it was some time ago — that it would be better for the Liberal party if there was a different leader who didn't attract so many negatives."

May thinks the hatred against Trudeau is un-Canadian, but believes he has fuelled cynicism with a string of broken promises — from electoral reform to purchasing a pipeline and increasing carbon emissions.

Perhaps the prime minister believes he is that good a campaigner, but, she says, somebody who likes him needs to tell him: "This is time for you to protect what you've accomplished in legacy terms and make sure there's a different communicator, a different face, a different voice, that people can believe going into the next election."

If May sees any parallels between Trudeau's hold on the Liberal party and her own with the federal Greens, she makes no mention of it. She's led the party for so long (from 2006 to 2019, and again from 2022 until now), that in many people's

minds, she is the Green party.

Tuesday, Pedneault quit following a federal council meeting Monday. The move came as a surprise to some.

In 2022, Pedneault contacted May for advice on his leadership bid. Weeks later, she proposed they run together on a co-leader ticket. She encouraged members to rank Pedneault — a young bilingual queer Black man — first, making him the de facto leader as the Greens' constitution allows for only one leader. But the majority of the approximately 8,000 voters ranked May number one. The plan was to have party members endorse a co-leadership model constitutional change, but 19 months after the May-Pedneault victory, a meeting still hasn't been held.

At their joint news conference announcing Pedneault's departure, May cited a provincial bye-election in Ontario last year as the reason the meeting was postponed. It was delayed again in June, apparently because of the federal bye-election in Toronto—St. Paul's. The *Star's* reporting suggests the co-leadership model was not without controversy with party members.

May says she was frustrated by the delay and that Pedneault was, too. The 34-year-old human rights activist refused to elaborate Tuesday as to why he was leaving, citing "personal reasons," but a source with knowledge of the situation suggested changes could have been made to ensure he remained.

She says despite Pedneault's resignation, she's still committed to the co-leadership model but a meeting likely won't be held until after three provincial elections this fall. She told the *Star* she's unwilling to resign and run on a co-leadership ticket with a new partner, even if the members agree to the constitutional change.

Instead, she suggests she'll pick her co-leader and possibly have the membership approve her choice of an "heir apparent."

Leadership races are expensive and she doesn't think it's wise to step down when a snap election could be called at any time. Plus, she says, the party just had a leadership race.

"The one thing I'm sure of, is they wanted me to be the leader. That part, I get."



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PM will shrink economy to meet NATO target

Re: Canada expects to hit NATO target in 2032, Trudeau says, July 12

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says we will reach two per cent of our gross domestic product for spending on defence, as required by NATO, by 2032.

He will do this by killing all money-generating industries (e.g. oil and gas) that don't conform with his beliefs.

If these industries don't bring in revenue, the gross domestic product will drop drastically, thus bringing his goal in sight.

It's time Trudeau was voted out of office, and we became the rich country that we should be!

Richard Hewins, Hamilton

Sometimes it's tenants who are the oppressors

I am all for protecting renters from being evicted by landlords in order to raise rents.

But, increasingly I am reading stories of landlords being abused by renters.

The renters have no stake in the property, so they let it deteriorate, dump garbage or even destroy property.

Why is it when a landlord

wants to evict a tenant they suddenly stop paying rent?

I would tend to take the side of the tenant if they maintained their rent payments up to date as they disputed an eviction.

Instead, it seems, many of them want to play the system, stop paying rent, stop cleaning the property and squat on the property during the very long process.

All the while forcing the landlord to make his payments, with no compensation from the tenant.

If you are not paying rent, you should be evicted. If you damage the property, you should be billed.

This would happen if you were in a hotel.

Andy Price, Ancaster

MPP Sarah Jama has chosen her own path

Re: The re-education of Sarah Jama, July 2

Columnist Margaret Shkimba seemed to overlook the reality that many people may have voted for MPP Sarah Jama because she was running as the New Democratic Party's candidate to be the representative for Hamilton Centre.

When Ms. Jama agreed to run as a member of the NDP, she undertook to act on behalf of her constituents and to support the NDP's values and platform; not as an independent activist.

Party leader Marit Stiles has advised Ms. Jama on what she needs to do in order to re-establish her membership in the party.

Ms. Jama has chosen not to comply. Ms. Jama has indicated her intention to run in the next election as an independent.

I trust the NDP will have their own candidate who will also run.

Theresa Flynn-Purchase, Hamilton

Hurricane's early arrival is a warning to us all

With Hurricane Beryl reaching unprecedented strength so early in the hurricane season, and record heat waves scorching the United States, is there any doubt that we have a climate problem?

Such extreme shifts in our climate cannot and should no longer be brushed aside.

No doubt, those in Atlantic Canada are hoping such a hurricane does not have their area in its crosshairs in the future.

Many East Coasters are still recovering from Hurricane Fiona and recent forest fires. Another catastrophic hurricane would devastate the area.

The human race must act swiftly and decisively now to address this climate crisis. It threatens our very existence on our home, Earth.

Mike LoSchiavo, Stoney Creek

Reflections on birds and memories



THOMAS FROESE
OPINION

There are few things as enjoyable to me as a good photograph, especially in summer.

My eldest recently brought back a fine photo from Paris. She was visiting a childhood friend, a British girl she knew while growing up in Uganda. So there he is, this photographed gentleman, an older Parisian who looks something like a French Santa Claus, sitting outside a bookstore on the banks of the Seine, feeding the birds.

Of course, we've largely lost our relationship with the animals, and rarely take lasting notice of the birds. Maybe they

don't pay much attention to us either. Anyone who's flown in a plane realizes how inconsequential things below can seem, those little toy cars down there.

But in the gentle morning light, sitting out front by our gnarly willow tree, with my coffee and reading and bare feet, I do better appreciate the song of sparrows and jays.

I recently captured a photo of one little winged darling feeding behind our house. There we have an old wooden bird cage, transformed into a feeder by way of its always-open door.

When I was a boy we had no birds. Who did? We had cats. Blackie and Fluffy even made our annual Christmas photos. That's gracious familial acceptance considering they'd sometimes drag animals, like birds, into the house.

There's a good argument to mind your business and let nature do what it will with these predator-prey activities. And here, funny enough, behind our Parisian man at that bookstore — it's called Shakespeare and Company — is a significant illustration of a cat.

Yes, birds have their vulnerabilities. As we all do. We too are fragile. And dependent. And mortal. You. Me. Any old bird. Any young bird. It's one lesson from all this. Even if human life isn't commonly brutish anymore, it's still short.

Jesus once said that even a tiny sparrow won't fall to the ground without its maker knowing. It sounds reassuring enough, even if it's hard to grasp considering the general callousness of our world. A teachable spirit, I suppose, helps.

Richard Bach's classic best-seller "Jonathan Livingston Seagull," explores this. In a world where you can be anything, for heaven's sake just be yourself. This is what Jonathan, the bird, learned. In time, with much practice, he perfected his flying. Other birds floundered. So they called him both a god and devil. In either case, Jonathan had a teachable spirit.

The average lifespan of a gull, by the way, is about 20 years. A larger bird of prey like a hawk might live twice that long. But singing sparrows? Two to five years. Robins even less.

My daughter's trip to Paris was her first solo flight. I realize this isn't the world's biggest news. But, speaking of teachable spirits, for a student working and planning, it shows there can be a certain pleasure in ag-

ing even when you're young.

Some people are late bloomers. This too is fine. Copernicus developed his theory of planetary motion in his 60s. Colonel Harland Sanders was in his 60s when he got KFC going. This too is good to consider on a relaxed summer weekend for a photo-loving columnist who turns a year older Sunday.

Tomorrow is also Bastille Day, the day the French Revolution began when that Paris prison was stormed.

That led to both horrible bloodshed and new thinking that helped reshape Western culture. You have to wonder what those birds were thinking then, circling history and scenes only they know.

But in case you're wondering about the birds of Paris in 2024, my daughter tells me that some did eat from this loving hand. Any of us could do worse.

THOMAS FROESE WRITES ABOUT NEWS, TRAVEL AND LIFE. FIND HIM AT THOMASFROESE.COM AND THOMASFROESE.SUBSTACK.COM