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**GUEST SHOT**

# The Silence of the Sams

My favourite poem, written by T.S. Eliot, begins: ‘

*We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw.  
Alas!  
Our dried voices, when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar.*

And with this first stanza of the “The Hollow Men” as perfect backdrop, you have to wonder just what the devil has gripped Coun. Peter Ladner.

Last week at the NPA’s AGM, Team Ladner attempted, and partly succeeded, in taking over a still-short-of-a-majority number of the seats available on the Board of Directors. It was a deafening silence of the Sams.

Ladner has sat quietly, head bowed and witnessed the implosion of beleaguered Mayor Silent Sam.

With His Silentness, has gone a sizable portion of the NPA’s electoral cache, and Mr. Ladner – no dummy, he – sees the writing on the wall: Someone had better do something pronto, or 2008 could end up like 2002 – an NPA washout.

Fair enough.

But it’s surely the way he’s going about it that’s the problem. Emblematic of Mr. Ladner’s entire political career, his actions are akin to those of the cow that gives great milk but kicks the bucket over.

Gladiator Ladner has a very long road to hoe before proving that he has the royal jelly to be mayor. And his war against Silent Sam will ensure ‘mutual assured destruction.’

His disciples, too, seem to have chosen, in blithe self-

incineration, that denying the existence of any effort by Mr. Ladner to unseat Silent Sam, is salient strategy ... well, think again.

Political matchstick men spinning the obvious won’t help.

At the AGM, denials from Mr. Ladner’s top lieutenants were fast and furious but didn’t match the reality of what was happening.

Viral stupidity knows no antidote.

Curious as well was an e-mail from Team Ladner notifying only his supporters of “lapsed” memberships. Interesting how he managed to get his hands on the coveted NPA membership list.

*Is it like this  
In death's other kingdom  
Waking alone  
At the hour when we are  
Trembling with tenderness  
Lips that would kiss  
Form prayers to broken stone.*

In the end, this is all the result of a power vacuum, whipped into a frenetic clip, by Silent Sam’s, thus-far, milquetoast turn as Mayor. His Worship received a wake-up call last week, while Peter Ladner shot himself in both feet.

*For Thine is the Kingdom.*

Somewhere, Gregor smiles....wryly...

*This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

Are you watching any of this, Madame Taylor?

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freelance editorial writer  
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