

BROCK'S BANTER: Let's talk about sex

By Brock Weir

This must be what's meant when they say your biological clock is ticking.

Maybe it is my alarmingly advancing years, or maybe it was the joy displayed on a couple of famous faces on Saturday when they took the newborn Princess Charlotte home from the hospital. I don't know, but it seems that clock might be ticking louder than that crocodile stalking Captain Hook.

Do I long for the day of welcoming a son or daughter into the world?

Would I be on tenterhooks just waiting for that first word to come out of their cherubic lips?

Where would we be when he or she takes their first teetering steps towards ultimate independence?

Then, of course, there are the challenges.

Would emotions run high on that first day of school where he or she takes that next step out into the wide world opening up to them, knowing that once they passed that threshold things would never really, truly be the same again?

And what a wonderful world they would be stepping out into.

How I long for the day when my child comes home from school confused by the emotions they feel that who they might appear to be on the outside doesn't quite match up to who they feel they are on the inside. Thankfully, I will be able to have that opportunity to tell them what they're feeling is normal ? or not ? all in my own good time. Or, if the mood strikes, bury my head in the sand to avoid a cold, inconvenient reality.

Won't it be thrilling that inevitable day when my son or daughter returns home from school mildly horrified, yet inexplicably intrigued, after a friend in class tries to hold hands or sneak a quick peck on the cheek? This would be the perfect opportunity to scream down the phone at the school's administration over the rapid decline of moral decency rather than teaching them about healthy relationships and evolving feelings they might be experiencing.

When their bodies start to change, I just hope I'm comfortable enough to discuss it with them.

I'd like to think I'd be a simple, straightforward dad. I wouldn't want to confuse my kids by challenging stereotypes surrounding homosexuality, gender identity, gender roles, gender expression, race, or even mental health or ability. Why rock the boat? And, as for my kids having domain over their own bodies? That's a given, but let's not cross that bridge until we get to it. No means no. It's just common sense, right?

Wrong.

In fact, strike the entire record.

My biological clock is quiet as ever, and recent scenes across Ontario are conspiring to keep it muffled.

And they are an interesting study in contrasts.

In Durham, Sudbury and, as of Monday, Peel, we have thousands of students who have worked diligently over the past four years, and after carefully eyeing and securing places in the colleges and universities of their choice, they're on the cusp of moving on to the next exciting phases in their lives. Now, as the Province and their respective teachers' unions face a stalemate on negotiating a new contract, that very future might be in jeopardy.

A discussion on who is right and who is wrong when it comes to these secondary school strikes is a topic for a different day, and might be a pretty potent one as far as this paper is concerned next week, but in areas currently affected by labour disruption, kids just want to get back to the classroom and claim their reward.

On the other hand, Monday also provided disturbing scenes of one Toronto elementary school nearly empty after parents pulled their children out of the classrooms in a ?strike? that could last up to a week, if organizers have their way, in a bid to protest Ontario's new sex education curriculum.

Queen's Park has been awash with parents and children protesting against the new curriculum, claiming it will teach their young kids the ins and outs (so to speak) of a cornucopia of sex acts, that ?gender fluidity? is a possibility (it's not? That might be news to my teachers in days of yore), that ?romantic dating? is a possibility and, horror of horrors, that kids might one day decide to explore their own bodies. If that doesn't have you reaching for your smelling salts, try this one on for size.

One particularly amusing pamphlet posted to the Facebook page curated by parents protesting such a curriculum rails against a move in Grade 1 to teach students what they describe as ?inappropriate body part names.?

In case your mind reels at the possibilities at what they might mean ? and let's face it, I wager about 80 per cent of readers just now had up to nine four letter words pop into their heads ? they provided examples: Vulva, Testicles.

To this, I say ?Balls!?

Perhaps not being a parent, I am missing a vital piece of the puzzle. If those are ?inappropriate body part names? to some parents, I don't even want to hear the infantile, apparently age appropriate alternatives.

And therein lies the problem. I sympathise with parents who want to be the first educators for their children and be the ones who teach their kids about the birds and the bees (is that term still appropriate?). I don't disagree. They have every right to be. But all too often it's time to step up and fulfil this role, they put off doing so and, in many cases, kids are left to seek their own answers.

If parents have qualms having frank discussions with their Grade 1 kids and bristle at having to call a penis a penis, chances are they are going to shrink away in the years questions become more challenging than, ?What does this do?'

To parents considering pulling your young ones out of school in an attempt to somehow stick it to the Ministry of Education, don't rely on heated, exaggerated social media rhetoric. Go online to the Ministry, read just what is actually proposed and make an informed decision. After all, the better informed you are the better you can help your kids along the way.

And, on that note, to all parents who are swarming Queen's Park, child in tow, protesting to preserve their innocence, how are you explaining to them just what you're objecting to and why they can't go to school? Hey, this might be a perfect opportunity to be the first educators you want to continue to be.