

BROCK'S BANTER: The Game Plan

By Brock Weir

If we're talking about ?special places in hell? this week ? and, sadly, we are, apparently ? I think at least one of them is probably equipped with a changing room and an Interac machine.

Let's cut to the chase: I hate shopping.

I don't mind the actual transaction of shopping, don't get me wrong. Online shopping can be great. Before you log on, you usually have a general idea of what you're looking to buy and, through a few clicks and key strokes, you can have any number of varieties ready for you to look at, more often than not accompanied by a litany of online reviews which, if read carefully, can help you avoid buyer's remorse the next day.

Trudging out to the shops, however, is a completely different story. Unless I have a game plan written down of exactly what I have to buy and a route mapped out on how I can navigate the mall in question in the least amount of time, getting to my one specific destination, and then beating a swift retreat, the very idea fills me with dread.

Unless I'm a tourist ? either abroad or on a staycation and playing tourist in my own backyard ? wandering aimlessly is not generally in my nature and, despite my overall disdain for the process, I am all too easily susceptible to cleverly designed advertising.

?The more you spend the more you save!? read one sign which I found both somehow logical and nearly impossible to resist?

?BOGO? ? well, sign me up ? but count me out for your mailing list.

At the end of the day, the process can be exhausting and what do you really have to show for it? Well, to illustrate my point, I'll just say the last time I went into a grocery store to get a salad I walked out of there with a 32 inch flat screen TV and no roughage to speak of.

Whether you like shopping or not, I suspect a great number of you felt a similar type of pain at some point on Thursday when you went to your polling station and produced the necessary pieces of ID to exercise your democratic duty and cast your vote.

This time around, I have to say that I considered all my options very thoroughly before casting a vote and, unlike in previous years, my final decision was almost down to the wire and some of the people I spoke to both personally and professionally on election day itself and in the days immediately following had similar perspectives.

In many of those cases, their final decision was made in the voting booth itself, voting with their heads, or voting with their hearts, voting for their local candidate regardless of who was leading the party they represented, holding their nose and voting for what they described as ?the devil they know? or simply flipping a coin.

In these situations, it is always important, of course, to do your due diligence in researching what party and philosophy best aligns with your own ? or, at the very least, is able to deliver the programs and services that are more or less reflective of your own worldview.

In an ideal world, we can rest assured that everyone did just that and marked their ballot accordingly.

But, as we all know, our world is hardly ideal.

As I waited for the results to roll in at the campaign office of the-now MPP-elect Christine Elliott on Thursday night, I got a text from a friend in Hamilton.

?If declining one's ballot is voting, I voted,? said my friend.

?It isn't. You didn't.? I replied.

?Well, I participated in the process. First time in my life I've ever felt bereft of choice.?

Well, if that's how they really felt, fair enough on the last point, but what was achieved by making the effort to go into the polling place and decline a ballot? Ford, Horwath and Wynne most certainly didn't spend the morning of June 8 looking at results poll by poll to see who was trying to stick it to ?em by refusing their ballot, and the good temporarily employees of Elections Ontario were most likely intent on keeping lines moving rather than considering the moral and philosophical ramifications of each spoiled ballot. It was duly noted, everyone moved on, and the vote continued.

I just hope my particular friend in the weeks ahead does not experience any particular buyer's remorse.

Although I have no regrets about my particular television purchase, I have, however fallen victim to more than one slogan in my day.

I just hope people of Ontario are content in their choice and do not experience any buyer's remorse.

In the lead-up to the election, I was told if you vote with your heart you can never disappoint yourself and it seems ? I hope ? that's what many Ontarians did.

If you voted for the Liberals or the NDP, hopefully it was for what Kathleen Wynne and Andrea Horwath were offering the province over any fears of what Doug Ford might bring to Ontario.

On the flipside, if you voted for Doug Ford and the PCs, I hope you did so not out of a simple anti-Wynne sentiment, but a firm conviction that what he and his candidates were offering was reflective of your own vision for Ontario. Well, as much as possible, as, outside from a few press releases and announcements made on the campaign trail, the absence of a full platform was very much like going out to the mall without a fully-mapped game plan.

But, democracy has spoken ? as have the people of Ontario.

Now, it is time to get down to business and move the Province forward.

We don't know what ?efficiencies? are going to be cut just yet, but I hope Mr. Ford heeds leadership rival Ms. Elliott's belief that what Ontario needs is a line by line review of every service the Province now provides to ensure value for money, rather than simply cutting on principle or to score political points.

A game plan is always good, and it's not too late.