

## Claire Hoy, National Affairs ? Some advice for your kids

Back in the dark ages of journalism ? in the 1960s and '70s ? before the Internet and Facebook and twittering, and even before television news had replaced newspapers as the main source of information for people, it was not uncommon to see voters turn up at the polling booths clutching a list of candidate's names which their local newspaper had endorsed.

Editorial endorsements, at the time, really meant something.

Not any more. Not really, even though the daily papers continue the silly little academic exercise, few of which surprise anybody who has been reading the particular newspaper's continuing coverage of an election campaign.

Was anybody ? anybody at all ? surprised, for example, when the Toronto Star, having pretended to weigh all the options facing the electorate, solemnly came down on the side of the Liberals and Kathleen Wynne? Or was anybody surprised when the Toronto Sun endorsed Tory Leader Tim Hudak?

The oddest endorsement, it says here, was The Globe and Mail's endorsement of Hudak, but only to lead a minority government. It is unclear how the Globe sees the electorate orchestrating their votes en masse so that a minority is the result. But there you have it. Indeed, if one believes the latest election opinion polls ? and given the recent abysmal record of the pollsters that's a dicey situation ? the chances of either a minority Liberal or minority Tory government seem quite high, in which case perhaps the Globe will be able to boast that it had a profound impact on the 2014 provincial campaign.

Meanwhile, back in the dark ages which I spoke of above, at a time when your humble correspondent was spending far too much of his time chasing politicians around the province and, indeed, the country, it was also commonplace for each media outlet to have internal pools, where people could put in a couple of dollars and, once the ballots were counted, the best guess won the pot.

The major lesson I learned from those pools was that almost inevitably the winner did not come from the collection of ?experts,? those of us who were actually out there on the campaign, treating every nuance, every announcement, every slip-up, as if it was really, really important to the ultimate outcome.

Instead, the winner usually was somebody who answered the phones on the city desk or some other task, with little or nothing to do with the actual campaign and no claim whatsoever to political expertise or acumen.

I tell you this only to illustrate the reality that despite what all the ?experts? will tell you ? and often these days contrary to what the pollsters claim ? we don't really know the outcome until the votes are actually counted.

This is not a bad thing.

Oh sure, it's likely safe to say that NDP Leader Andrea Horwath will not be premier by the end of this week. But it is not safe to say if her party's results will be as woeful as her actual election campaign has appeared to be.

The importance of the NDP result, of course, is that if the party fares better than expected, it will likely do so at the expense of the Liberals and, therefore, will inadvertently help the Tories. That is why the aforementioned Star ? which has rarely met a Liberal it couldn't promote ? actually published a piece written by Wynne (or, more likely, a staffer) saying a vote for Horwath is a vote for Hudak.

That was accompanied in the Sunday paper with a long, favorable article, the gist of which told us that Wynne is very close to her family. (I have reason to suspect Hudak and Horwath are quite fond of their families as well, but that's for another day ? or another newspaper.)

It is hardly a secret to regular readers of this space that your correspondent is of a decidedly conservative bent ? not necessarily in a partisan sense, but certainly philosophically.

That is why Hudak's gutsy plan to tackle Ontario's disastrous spending record appeals to me, the very same reason that his plans will not appeal to many other voters.

And that's just fine. That's the point of an election.

When my five children were getting old enough to vote I had two pieces of advice: a)- read something about the various platforms; b)- get off your butt and vote for the one that either appeals most or offends less.

I think that advice applies to all.

