

UNDECIDED NO LONGER: VALUES, INSTINCTS WIN OUT

Two go Green, Grits pick up other two
Duceppe walked on water in one dream, but he turned away, losing one Bloc vote

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SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

No more doubts. No more polls. No more dreaming about federal candidates.

Two long and arduous months of rumination ended yesterday as the four undecided voters The Gazette has been following cast their ballots on election day.

For some, their daily ambivalence had even crept into their sleep. In a dream last week, Célestin Bouchard said he saw Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe walk on grass and then on water.

The only problem was that Duceppe turned his back on the 30-year-old singer-songwriter and started walking away from him.

So Bouchard, a Hochelaga resident, decided to vote for the Green Party - represented in his dream by the green grass. "I felt I had to sway toward nature," he said. "For sure, it was

a spiritual choice."

The fact no Bloc Québécois candidate came to visit him also played a role in Bouchard's decision, he allowed. "I think they took for granted that the (Bloc) candidate would win in Hochelaga," he said. "I find that sad."

Joseph Silkauskas said his ambivalence didn't keep him awake.

"But in the time between (being) half-asleep and half-awake I have been thinking about this," said the retired elementary school teacher. Ultimately, he threw his support behind the Liberal Party.

"It was tiring, demanding," Silkauskas, 75, said of the last two months.

Before he made up his mind, two of the contenders vying for his Lac-Saint-Louis riding dropped by to make their pitches for his vote.

Silkauskas also attended a local candidates' debate and tuned in daily to the election

campaign coverage.

A longtime Liberal supporter, Silkauskas lost faith in Paul Martin's party after the revelations of the Gomery commission.

He had blamed his indecision on what he perceived as the lacklustre character of the prime-ministerial hopefuls.

He was finally swayed by his local candidate - Francis Scarpaleggia, who visited his Beaconsfield home in the midst of last Wednesday's ice storm.

Emily Wilkinson voted yesterday for the first time in her life. Making up her mind proved to be a heart-wrenching process, said the 21-year-old Dawson College student.

She chose to stand behind her ideals and vote for the Green Party candidate.

But she watched with apprehension as the election results trickled in last night. "I'm really going to be kicking myself if the Conservatives win and I voted this typically college idealistic vote," she said.

The Notre Dame de Grâce resident said she is concerned about the fulfillment of the Kyoto protocol on greenhouse-gas emission reductions.

Filip Gavanski was not ready

to take that chance. The 24-year-old law student had flirted with the New Democratic Party before last week, thinking the New Democrats would push the government on the issue of electoral reform.

Gavanski said he thinks a voting system where popular support carries more weight than the number of ridings won by a given party would allow Canadians to vote according to their convictions.

But the rise of the Conservatives in the opinion polls persuaded him to vote strategically. He cast his vote for the Liberals, a party he also supported in the 2004 election.

"I remember what happened to the Conservatives a few elections back," he said. "They were so devastated by the Mulroney government that the 1993 elections proved to be a loss from which they could not recover. I would like to avoid this kind of a situation for the Liberals now."

For a complete list of final election results, news and reaction from across the country and a chance to Sound Off on the results either in text or video, go to decisioncanada.ca