

Bill Rea ? Clinton + Trump = Entertainment

My wife and I could have spent last Monday night watching the Blue Jays get defeated, but we opted watch Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump go at it.

Since it's never fun to watch your team blow it in the late going, I think we made the right choice, at least in terms of entertainment value.

True, the early part of the ball game was very entertaining, as bench-clearing brawls almost always are.

I was a little late getting home from work that night, and I pulled into the driveway with the car radio on, just as the benches were emptying for the first time. I hurried into the house and was a little surprised to see Beth in the kitchen and not in front of the TV. ?They've just cleared the benches,? I told her, and she lost little time heading downstairs to watch the action (our TV is in the basement). I had a few things to take care of first, so I was still upstairs several minutes later when Beth yelled up that the benches had emptied again. Down the stairs I went.

So yes, we had a very entertaining prelude to the feature of the evening, namely the debate.

I had been looking forward to this most eagerly, and was not too disappointed with what I saw. It sort of lived up to my expectations, whatever they were.

I go along with most of the opinions I read and heard that Trump looked very good for about the first half hour, but that Clinton got her act together the rest of the way. I read one columnist who thought Trump deserved the nod because he was a rookie going up against a very seasoned political operator. For one thing, Trump might be new at this, but he's already got a very successful nomination victory under his belt, and there are many, many very skilled politicians in the United States who never made that level of achievement. He's no rookie.

The race is not yet over, and considering the way things are shaping up, I'm far too chicken to go putting my predictions on the record. Although I consider myself a conservative, I am hoping Clinton gets in, partly because I believe she is the more qualified of the two, and partly because I still regard Trump as a political clown. I will confess I'm a little worried about a guy like that having control of a nuclear arsenal.

There is always room for surprises in a thing like an election.

I reflect back a couple of months, when I wrote in this very spot that Trump's campaign was little more than a curiosity. I have written a couple of times that I expected his campaign to peter out, that it was very unlikely that he would get the Republican nomination, and if by some miracle he got the nomination, his chances of election were about zip.

Well, his campaign didn't peter out, he did get the nomination (handily too), and there are polling numbers that say he could pull it off.

I'm still having trouble figuring out why this all has happened.

One of the beefs against Clinton is she represents the old way of doing politics. I guess there is truth to that, but one of the reason why that way is still in use is it has a successful track record.

I think back to the 2008 presidential campaign, or actually the vice-presidential campaign. I remember the night Sarah Palin debated Joe Biden. Palin came across as effervescent and lively, while Biden seemed to come across in the same old stodgy way. I thought at the time there was no way Palin could miss getting traction from her performance. I was wrong.

Anyone heard anything about Palin lately?

There have been other times when relative political outsiders have been able to have some impact. Ross Perot drew a lot of attention, but his campaigns for president in the 1990s didn't attract much in the way of votes. John Anderson drew a lot of favourable publicity in 1980 when he made the contest between Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan a three-way affair. Then again, Anderson wasn't really an outsider. He had spent 20 years in Congress. I don't think he was even trying appear to be an outsider.

If anyone in that election was an outsider, it was Reagan. He was running based on a couple of terms as governor, after a sort of stellar movie career.

Ever seen any of his films? I've seen a couple, and the only one in which I thought his acting was passible was an offering entitled That Hagen Girl, and even Reagan later had the sense to be quoted as saying that was a part he wished he had never touched. It's generally regarded as one off the worst films in history.

Yet this was the political resume he carted into the White House, and I cheered at the time (this, incidentally, was before I had seen any of his movies).

At the time, America was hurting. The economy was a mess, some 50 people who had been working in the American embassy in Iran were being held hostage by the government of that country, their president had been forced from office some six years before

and I don't think they had yet gotten over the international humiliation that was Vietnam.

Thus I have trouble understanding the appeal of Trump. He says he wants to make America great again, yet I'm hard pressed to understand where that greatness has faltered in the last several years. Although I don't think Barack Obama has been an especially great president, I don't think things have been that bad under his watch. The last time the economy seriously tanked was under the previous administration. There have been no major international embarrassments.

Yet Trump's appeal has caught on, for reasons I don't think anyone completely understands

He is a political outsider, a successful businessman and one who has been in the public eye for many years. He put his name to a board game, which I played once about 25 years ago. It was a little like Monopoly, although money played with was in the billions. He had his own reality TV show, which I watched a couple of times. There was a time Newstalk 1010 (CFRB) had regular morning commentaries from Trump. His business exploits have been tabloid fodder for years.

Is that the makings of a president? I guess a lot of Americans think so.

And it could happen. He's the type of guy that a lot of middle Americans would vote for.

If All in the Family were still on the air, I expect Archie Bunker would be singing Trump's praises. And there are a lot of people like him.

Clinton supporters might want to take a bit of comfort in that. While the Archies in the States might be for Trump, people who watched All in the Family can remember one bothersome fact about Archie ? he didn't vote.

