

Bill Rea ? Discovering a good tale

My wife and I spent Friday evening taking in a performance at Rose Theatre in Brampton.

Although I had been to that facility a number of times for various reasons, I had never actually seen a production there, and the same was the case for Beth. But she had been going through a schedule for the Rose some weeks ago, and looked up July 25, knowing that was our anniversary (16th, for those who are curious), and found something that seemed interesting.

It was a Summer Theatre Series 2014 presentation of Sleuth. There will be other performances in the coming weeks, and it's recommended.

Beth put forth the idea to me, and I lost very little time following her lead. Theatre is always a nice way to spend an evening or celebrate an anniversary. As well, Beth knows the story has always been a favourite of mine.

Alas, Sleuth is one of those stories that's rather hard to describe without giving away too much of the plot. Suffice to say it's set in England and involves people playing mind games with each other. If you've seen it, then you know what I mean. If you haven't seen it, then see it.

But be careful what you see. By all means, take in the production at the Rose.

Or you might want to find a version of the original 1972 movie, which featured Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine. That's how I discovered the story, and by accident too.

It was in the early 1970s, and the TV show MASH was very prominent on the tube. My family watched it regularly, and my mother was able to find a copy of the book on which the story was based, by Richard Hooker, for me in time for Christmas that particular year.

I read it, enjoyed it (although I have always thought the writing was even worse than mine), then lent it to my friend John, who lived up the street.

Then, during the dull days of summer the year (I think) I was 15, one of the local movie houses was putting on a double feature ? MASH and something called Sleuth. Both John and I were anxious to see the movie from which this popular TV show had sprung, and we had enough remaining from our respective allowances to cover the cost. The mile or so we had to walk was not that big a deal for two fit young teens, so we made our way to the evening showing (John's younger brother Peter and his friend Dave went to the afternoon showing, but more about that later).

The fact is, I was a little disappointed in MASH, which was the first movie shown. Perhaps my expectations were too high.

The movie ended, and John and I killed time in the theatre lobby, debating whether we should hang around for that other movie.

I had never heard of Caine, and was far too young to appreciate the artistic contributions of Olivier.

?Who the hell is Laurence Oliver?? I asked John at one point, having misread the marquee.

Eventually, we reasoned that we had already paid to get in, so we might as well take in the show.

I'm very glad we did.

In addition to a colourful set, splendid acting and some pretty pithy dialogue, much of which is used in stage productions (I've subsequently seen the film often enough to know), I think that was the first movie I ever saw that actually asked me to think. I walked out of that theatre that night a very enthralled young man.

John and I made our way home, and found Peter and Dave sitting on his front stoop as we arrived. They naturally asked us what we thought of the movies, and the two younger guys thought I was nuts when I commented on how much I had enjoyed Sleuth.

I haven't heard from any of those guys in more than 30 years.

In the summer of 1993, I took my vacation in Prince Edward Island. I noticed on a community announcement board that said a local theatre group was putting on a production of Sleuth that evening. I was unattached at the time, and had nothing else to do, so away I went.

Again, I was very glad I did.

Don't get the wrong idea. Just because it's Sleuth doesn't mean it's good.

They remade the movie in 2007, with Caine playing the role Olivier nailed so many years before. I've seen it. Don't waste your time.

Keep those calls coming

I'm afraid I have to work in an apology this week.

Some of you might have had trouble getting in touch with us at the Citizen last week. The explanation is as simple as it was frustrating.

We lost our phone service in the office shortly before noon last Tuesday, and it stayed out for about 48 hours. In addition to not being able to make or receive phone calls at the office, we lost our internet service, which meant we couldn't get or receive emails

either.

As the song goes, 'Don't it always seem to go, That you don't know what you've got, Till it's gone.?'

Like I stated above, it was frustrating.

True, we were able to stay in contact with the world with our cell phones, but we were still operating at a disadvantage.

From my point of view, Tuesday is deadline day. There were a lot of emails I was expecting and needed to have before things could proceed very far. Fortunately, I can access my work-related emails on my laptop (I plan to make plenty of use of that capacity during my upcoming vacation). Unfortunately, I need Wi-Fi to access them, and that was down in the office. Fortunately, I have Wi-Fi at home, so that's where I headed early Tuesday afternoon to get my emails. I also took advantage of the situation to make myself some lunch, thus sparing myself the expense of buying it.

But that was essentially winging it. What was really needed was phone service in the office.

There were some calls made by various folks in the office (on our cells, obviously) in an effort to get some help from the service provider. But we were still down when we called it a day Tuesday.

Wednesday is the day the Citizen is put together for publication, and I'm usually up and going at 6 such mornings. The first thing I did last Wednesday morning was call the office, hoping I would get the answering system, which would have meant the phones were back up. I didn't, meaning I had an interesting day to look forward to.

We kept trying to get assistance from the service provider. I talked to one representative on my cell, and she gave me two toll-free numbers, which could likely be useful. I called the first one, and was immediately congratulated on winning an all-expense-paid trip to Barbados. Considering the mood I was in, I was very tempted to take them up on it.

Production day requires very frequent communications, both electronically and by phone, with our Orangeville office. The only way to do it was for me to pack up all my stuff and head up there.

Don't feel too sorry for me. Think what the poor folks in Orangeville had to put up with.

Everything came back on at about 11 last Thursday morning. My day was made when I got the news.

So if you were trying to get in touch with us, either by phone or email during that 48-hour period and were unable to, you now know why.

Sorry for any inconvenience. If you need more info, I'm afraid that will have to wait until I get back from Barbados

