

Tragedy and comedy played out on election night

*"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players."*

—William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

Actually, the Bard was simply showing an understandable theatrical bias. Player yes, but competing in the great sporting arena of life rather than giving pre-rehearsed performances in front of an audience which can choose which tragedies or comedies it wishes to patronize.

And what greater evidence of this than a week in which the usually gripping Stanley Cup finals were relegated to the status of a pre-season exhibition baseball game. For when life's high drama offers a tarnished foot race that would determine the fastest man in the universe, followed by an election featuring more

illegal elbow smashes than a roller derby match, driving up Hwy. 404 at rush hour suddenly becomes an exercise in advanced diplomacy.

I was still trying to come to grips with just what had transpired at the SkyDome the day previous when I realized the polls closed in less than an hour and I was yet to decide who was to be the lucky recipient of my vote Monday. Adding to my anxiety was the fact that I still had half of the back lawn to cut, and it was proving to be a herculean task given that it had been allowed to grow almost to seed.

Cluttering my mind even more was the need to plan a strategy for my post-election coverage of two of the candidates in the riding so as to be

able to give our readers the old 'thrill of victory/agonies of defeat' report in our Tuesday paper.

Upon finally arriving to exercise my democratic franchise, I was greeted by a youthful election official with earrings in his nostril and in his eyelid. So distracted was I by this human pin cushion that I had to regroup for a few seconds to try to remember just which candidate I had finally decided to endorse. I took my ballot and walked into the cardboard cubicle, surveyed the names of the 127 some-odd hopefuls, and looked for something with which to mark my X. I saw two pencils which, combined, totalled an inch and a half in length. At least it had been a good turnout, I thought to myself approvingly. Observing that one pencil



From
Where
I Live

Bruce Stapley

was leadless, I attempted to use the other, only to find it to be just like one of those dud pencils back in Grade 2 where the lead was swimming around uselessly in its cavity. With great effort, I succeeded in making a rather skewed X, observing how the whole exercise rather aptly summed up this wonky election.

Then it was off to what would turn out to be a rather sombre 'victory' celebration for the candidate who would finish a very distant second. A bristol board tally sheet had been set up at the front of the room for the purpose of recording poll results as they were phoned in by eager scrutineers.

However, it was quickly decided after the first onesided result was scribbled onto the big page to dispense with what would only serve to be a graphic exclamation mark of the candidate's disheartening defeat.

I got my quote, and at around 11:15 p.m., dashed off to the lair of the third place-finishing candidate. I was greeted by the same funeral atmosphere. After a brief chat with the disappointed would-be MP, it was back to the office to engage in some genuine big city late night deadline journalism.

Driving home, I observed the unholy mess of election signs cluttering the main road ways. Most belonged to soundly routed candidates whom only a few hours previous had dreamed of victory.

And once again it was another line from Shakespeare that came to mind, summing up this suddenly eerie arena well after midnight. "The rest," he penned in Macbeth, "is silence."

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