



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Talk about relief. Now that we've got the big story behind us, we can get down to the day-to-day minutia of life. I mean, with the massive decisions behind us, the diminutive details calling for our attention. The cliff-hanger tension has approached medication necessity; frankly, I don't know how emotionally fragile people have been able to function as the attention of the most powerful nation in the modern era has had life on-hold awaiting the counting of the ballots and the naming of the winners...

Forget Barack and Hillary; that's a school yard scuffle. The real deal was settled last night - at the Kodak Theatre. The nod went to "No Country for Old Men" (doesn't bode well for John McCain). The boys' and girls' divisions were swept by Daniel Day-Lewis (I thought hyphenated last names were for women who didn't want to give up their identity when they got married?) from "There Will Be Blood" (I guess the 2008 Democratic National Convention documentary will be "There Will Be Blood II") and Marion Cotillard from "La Vie en Rose" (the French should accept our olive branch; best actress for a film with English subtitles).

At the Academy Awards - the 80th Annual - the Super Delegates were all over the house. Everybody has an opinion, but only members of "The Academy" get to vote. It isn't



helter-skelter; there are more rules governing the awards process than Paris Hilton's attorney studied for his bar exam. The folks who left with one of those little statues convinced somebody that they deserved their moment in the lights.

Funny, though: Sunday night's drama had two parts. The first part was outside the Kodak Theatre, on what's called "The Red Carpet." In the hour leading up to the 5:00 PST kickoff, the A-Listers strutted their stuff from the curb to the door. Dresses, hair and escorts all strove for the "look," and the catty commentators gave their expert opinions on who had it (the look) and who didn't. Instant mortification: wear the same designer gown sported by another A-Lister. The unpardonable sin...

Once inside, once the cameras were rolling and Jon Stewart seized control, all of the pomp of the Carpet had no more circumstance. From that point forward, life - for everyone inside - was all about the results,

tucked inside 24 envelopes that had been "audited by the firm of Price Waterhouse Coopers." Nail biting was unavoidable during the three hour spectacle, the centerpiece of The Day the Earth Stood Still.

One thing's for sure: Hollywood may fall in-and-out of love with America (so many stars seem to rethink whether they plan to live here or not, based on the presidential election outcomes every four years), but they're always in love with themselves. On Oscar night, attendance at the gala is mandatory: anyone who is somebody - or, is dating a somebody, or wants to someday be a somebody - will either be "in the house," or at one of the after parties. No excuses offered, or accepted. Failure to Appear carries a mandatory sentence of one year on an infomercial with Chuck Norris or Kirstie Alley.

Actors and Actresses, Directors and Producers: they may say that they live for the box office results, but it's more often their investors - the folks with the money at risk - who sweat that financial measurement. The real artist types tolerate the sounds of the cash register, but their hearts are really in the words that follow the opening of those envelopes. "And the Oscar for *Actor in a Leading Role/Actress in a Leading Role/etc etc etc etc etc* goes to..."

At least they know what they're working toward. I wonder how many Christians are coming onto the set of life every day looking past their Box Office (the pay window at work) and their Red Carpet (the snitty comments they get from the world around them about how they look, who they're with, what they're wearing) to their upcoming Awards Ceremony: *"For we must all appear before the judgment*

seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."(2 Corinthians 5:10)

That's a ceremony worth living for. Oscars come and go, elections are unrelenting, and the red carpet is bloodstained from the wounds of insensitive people. The recognition of the God who is our only audience that matters is waiting for us, just through that door...

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