



Dr. Die Cast



Are We There Yet?

It's summer time, and anyone who has taken a vacation trip with children has heard those immortal if not nagging words: "Are we there yet?" Those words can sometimes build to a fever pitch especially if there is enough sibling rivalry in the seat next to them to start something resembling cage fighting. The volume between the disputing siblings rivals that of a rock concert. If OSHA ever took the time to study the noise level inside an automobile during a family vacation there would probably be a mandate for parents to wear hearing protection. After all, didn't we promise our spouse and the kids that it was going to be a fun vacation? Everyone looks forward to the arrival. It was the journey they weren't buying in to. What's the solution? Participation - getting them involved in the journey. A few years ago, I volunteered to take the two eldest grandkids on a trip from Michigan to a family reunion in Dallas. Everyone thought I had lost my mind. After reminding them that I kept duct tape in the trunk (forget that last comment) I promised that they would not get bored. We had cameras, GPS, maps, video games, movies and a DVD player that plugged in to the car's 6-speaker system. After plugging in the destination, each day I tasked them with keeping track of our progress in the atlas and GPS and the distance to the next turn and making sure we remained on track. If we took a side trip that was a change from our

initial plan it was something that was chosen with the understanding that it would probably change our arrival time. It was a great trip full of fun memories and lots of learning.

So is there a point? We are currently in a heated political campaign season. The TV, radio, newspaper and internet campaign ads are just getting started. Lots of people are already wishing the elections were over and asking, "Are we there yet?" According to Vince Lombardi, "The Green Bay Packers never lost a football game. They just ran out of time." If your candidate is ahead in the polls, you can't wait for Election Day, if they are behind, borrowing from Vince Lombardi, you need more time. This is a critical year for our nation. Ask yourself, are you satisfied with the stewardship of our politicians? If you ran your household or business like they run their office (and spend our money), how long could you remain solvent? According to the web site "INFO Please" (<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0781453.html>), only about 60% of voting age citizens are registered to vote and then only about 60% of them voted. Other sources are even more negative reporting that less than 35% of the voting age citizens vote. There is a word for that and it is APATHY! Apathy can be best described as a reported asking various people on a street corner, "Can you define apathy?" While several people get close, one

truly apathetic individual nails it when he shrugs his shoulders and replies as he turns to walk away, "I don't know and I don't give a 'Rip!'" Maybe you feel that your vote doesn't count for much. Never underestimate the power of one individual to make a profound change. In 2007 my wife signed up to chair a grassroots movement in our city of Grand Rapids. She had little prior organizational experience and felt she didn't know enough people outside of our immediate friends and family. Last year there were over 1,700 participants and thousands of volunteer hours involving people from communities from as far away as 50 miles.

You *can* make a difference. Study the issues, study the candidates, look at the history, check the information sources, and get involved and vote. If you are struggling with a way to choose from among the candidates, rather than close your eyes and holding your nose while you check the box, ask yourself if you would trust the individual campaigning for your vote to be your airline pilot, your investment broker, your doctor or your lawyer. If not, then perhaps you shouldn't let them manage your state or nation either. In the end, there are three kinds of people: "Those who make things happen", "Those who watch things happen" and "Those who asked, 'What just happened?'"

Go make something good happen. ●

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