

Nervous Anticipation: Friday 24th September 2010

Nervous anticipation. From going to bed until waking up and in between. I've living, breathing, eating, football. Today is the Almanac lunch and I will meet and put faces to all the welcoming group of other footy tragics. When did I get this bad? When did I turn from enthusiastic to obsessive?

I am more nervous than last year, I know what is coming, I know now what it's like to get ready in the morning and make our way to the G. I prepare food – cut fruit, get some lunch (possibly buy sushi) take an urn of some description to refill my St.Kilda mug (recent early birthday present from my daughter Rachel. She has decided that in future, she'll only buy me presents from the St.Kilda shop. She can't go wrong this way.) Usually I take my St.Kilda blankets (2), my scarf, hat that I knitted. (That's an interesting story too, because I admired a knitted hat when I met the wearer in the loo at a game and she took me to meet the maker, her aunty, who gets so many compliments she carries spare knitting patterns in her bag. So I thanked her and knitted and now I have one of my own.) I don't know if I'll take the warm stuff as it will be 20 degrees Celsius in Melbourne, a few showers. I've got the tickets in my footy bag, camera ready.

Then tomorrow I will get dressed, black pants, black runners (the best, most comfortable Nike Vomero – like walking on cushions). I bought "I love NY" socks in St.Kilda colours, so now I wear them. I bought a necklace at "Lion King" in Las Vegas and I now wear that, plus earrings my daughter Mimi made 4 years ago, all in the magic colours. I even bought a phone cover in the USA, a beautiful flower pattern in my favourite colours. So I will dress and prepare and we will leave at 11.30 to go to the station, train it to Richmond, and meander up to the G with a hundred thousand others.

We've blow up the balloons (which have freaked out our three dogs) which I will put outside today after lunch and put streamers up as well.

I watched the Thursday night "Prime Time Game Day", saw the coaches and their nervous anticipation and most of the panel are tipping Collingwood. I can live with that. They have had a mighty year. I watched the event that is "The Footy Show" and I don't know why it doesn't win more awards. It is a major Australian production, has great Aussie music and characters and is quite a party. And it gives me another footy hit. Again, the coaches, the panels, the discussion of the changes, Baker in, McEvoy out. Mac is heartbroken. Pesti and Davis in for Collingwood.

I went to the practice on Tuesday and it was a show for us supporters rather than a real practice like last year. Last year, Rooley ran and ran and really ran, with King and Gardiner, it was very much a practice and training. This year, they did very light workouts and stretches and in the end, some competitive handballing games with a winner and loser and they and the crowd involved in "winning". About 5000 supporters turned up, enough for good support and noise and colour. We were decked out in our uniforms as they were in theirs.

On Wednesday, I spent 4 hours (with a break for some work in the middle) finishing up my painting. I figure when we win, I'll want to put it up in pride of place, if we lose to Collingwood, I'll be heartbroken for awhile and won't want to work on it. So other than a little shading to the right side of Nicks face, it's done. It still doesn't look like him, but it feels like him, it's his mark and his kick. It's a bit cartoony really, which shouldn't surprise me as I came to art via simple cartoons. There's a segment of him marking on the left, in a square, then a square down below with the group hug, and then a long Nick kick covering the main canvas, with a black and white army and a St.Kilda army sectioned in the back. I started it at the end of last season and have worked on and off since then. I have done and re-done the faces 10 times at least. The rest has stayed essentially the same.

Tonight, we will watch "Before the Game", my favourite footy show. The kids have all been away the last few weeks, Mimi in France on exchange, Rachel working for IINET in Perth for 3 months and Daniel at his fathers studying for Year 12. So I have been free to obsess and go crazy. When Daniel came for tea (and the Brownlows) on Monday night and saw the decorations he told others that I was worse this year. What can I say, I live to embarrass my children, as my parents did before me. So Zamir and I have had the freedom to live our footy lives without the usual stresses and demands. It's been quite a holiday.

So that's my footy week, that's how I've managed to work from Monday morning to Friday morning, to keep myself busy. I only have a few hours work at the moment as I go from a therapist to an artist.

I have a startling confession to make before I finish. I can't believe I'm saying this, but over the weeks I've watched Collingwood, I have also come to admire them and their level of their commitment and belief in their brand of footy, and even though I fear losing to them and the heartbreak that will bring to our precious boys, the upside is that awful outcome will be some pleasure that the Pies did well.

Again, go figure! I so want us to win and believe we can win and be the winners, but I have made a neat deal that my life will go on and the world will be OK if we don't.

That's what I've really fallen in love with – in the end, it's not floods or fires or famines or wars or violence, sickness and heartbreak. We live in a country that one of the biggest things I have to worry about is my team winning or losing. We are very lucky souls no matter what the outcome.

Go Saints.

Yvette Wroby