

Everyone is being nice

That's what I've come away with from yesterday's Grand Final draw. Both St.Kilda and Collingwood players and fans were so stunned at the result, that it was quiet, reserved, polite. Collingwood fans and St.Kilda fans TALKED to each other, shared their shock and disbelief, shook their heads at each other, laughed. Said "See you next week" with no malice aforethought. So much for all the pundits calling it a 40 point win for the Pies, they never put St.Kilda away and we never stopped fighting and defending and getting the goals.

But a draw? Is it fate that when these two clubs meet, something bizarre happens? In a way it's fitting, it was too close to call. We are each others equals, in ability and mistakes. Missed goals from both, mistakes and turn-overs from both, claiming back the leads and getting ahead (mostly the Pies were ahead and we did a Geelong 2009 and stole it in the dying last 15 minutes but not enough of a robbery).

Text messages during the game and after tell a story:

Rachel (watching on TV in Perth: OMG – I'm on the edge of my seat

Me: Much better (3rd Quarter keeping the Pies goalless) xxxx Now to finish by winning

Yariv (Zamir's son) Good luck, I think you'll win

Me: xxxxx (a bit wordless)

After the siren:

Deb: Wow – how extraordinary. What's the atmosphere like?

Me: Stunned. We R all being nice to each other. At least there's next week. Go Sainters again.

We went with Uncle Bob and cousin Gary, my almost 80 year old mother Elfie, Zamir, Rina and I. We had good seats, not undercover on the wing, it was a St.Kilda block, right next door to a Collingwood block.

I have to say, we were all pretty well behaved, except for some smart alec guys in both blocks taunting each other. The Pie fans went wild when they goaled, ditto our blocks when we did.

(Robert Harvey and Stuart Loewe were visible in the front of the stand above – I got photos).

The crowd stood to see the unseeable if the ball was near us. I sat with my Mum and waited for the disappointment of a point or the screams of a goal to mark my footy record. I said "chewy on your boots" like a mantra when they shot at goal, and was

rewarded several times. I quietly, internally encouraged when we were goaling, and sometimes was rewarded.

At least McEvoy may get a chance if Gardiner is injured. You see, there's always an upside. We get to go to the footy one more week. I was sad that it would be all over and I'd have to find something else to obsess over, and here we are, another week worrying about tickets, injuries, form, the Pies, getting there.

Mum has already said it is too much for her and she won't go next week. Rachel is considering flying over from Perth for the rematch. Who knows, after my brothers' daughter' wedding he and my sister will watch the game (perhaps our time Tuesday) and decide to do what he's done the last 2 years, fly out, and come to the Grand Final. If he does, he either has Mums ticket or Rinas (who generously said she'd bow out if he comes all the way.) So who knows. No-one predicted this, no one expected this.

It's actually very funny when you get over the shock. Now I think of Arnie S's line in the Terminator with a bit of creative editing: We'll be back.

The rain came as we left the ground, but no-one cared.

Postscript:

For the first time in my life, someone invited me to a Grand Final breakfast. We organised ourselves and headed off. It was around the corner, someone I'd class as a friendly acquaintance. He had speakers (but I won't say who and identify the event). His home was a museum and art show of a fanatic from 6 years old to adulthood. I felt it was a good omen and an even better one when Barry Breen, yes, THE Barry Breen, arrived. I approached him, very few people were there at 9am – it pays to be an early bird, and got a photo with Zamir, Barry BREEN and I. I said to him “I'd missed the 1966 GF but followed the team for 4 years afterwards.” He was very sweet and seemingly used to being fawned over. He signed my hosts visitors book and left the room (I have that effect on people but actually, he looked at some of the stuff in cabinets and then left) and I signed the visitors book to be directly under his writing. I am back to being 12 years old and in awe (just as I was when I went to matches with Deb and we waited outside the rooms at Moorabbin for autographs). We got them several times over.

It was a lovely, generous and infectious morning, all the friends and family and fellow St.Kilda crazies were invited. We sang “By the seaside”, the theme song that was sung at the 1966 Grand Final, as well as “Oh when the Saints”. We ate the food provided, some of us watched the documentary about 1966 and re-watched BB's point and all felt hopeful.

Another SMS:

Deb: Carn the Saints!!! Let's hope that it's finally our year. Xx Deb

Me: From your lips to goods ears!!! Go Sainters. You met Kevin (Rudd). I just shook hands and got photo with Barry Breen!!!!xxx Yvette

Deb: Wow. Is he still cute? (The answer was Yes, very, has aged very very well)

Another Postscript:

We did the train, the Brunton Ave walk, buying our \$15 footy records and singers and we stopped at a group of 5 infectious St.Kilda diehard musicians, We stopped for photos and I joined in. I sung harmonies with the boys and got right into it, and was very surprised that after 25 years of not performing, I can ham it up with the best. I can even keep up a tune.

And now to get ready for next week.

Yvette