



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

The Kodak Theater in Hollywood has seats for 3,401 people; when you add-in the backstage bozos and the curbside crowds, there were thousands of people who deemed the 81st Annual Academy Awards (you know him by Oscar) worthy of their evening. The headlines on the front page seem too much like a modern math homework assignment (*if a train leaves Washington with \$1 trillion in stimulus, and the engineer wants to balance the budget with a Washington-bound train filled with \$1 trillion, when will that train leave your bank account?*). That's too taxing; *let's take a break and watch the Oscars...*

How many people were watching? Only the advertisers know for sure. The ABC production was designed to win the audience back; the last few years have been deemed "yawners" by the "we're not in the business" folks who had hundreds of other channels to surf. Sending a few dozen gold-colored statues home with the winners takes a lot of effort, it seems. They only make about 60 of them each year, and the estimated cost of the 13" tall, eight-ounce trophy is \$330 out-the-door at the R.S. Owens Mfg. Company. Each one is numbered, and if you win one, you can't sell it (*winners sign a waiver promising never to sell theirs, unless it's back to the Academy. Par value: \$1*).



You can, however, purchase the lil' guys who went out before 1950 (the attorneys hadn't become involved in the paperwork yet, back then). Steven Spielberg has earned three, but he's bought two more: he paid \$578,000 for the one Betty Davis won in 1938 for her performance in ***Jezebel***, and \$607,500 for Clark Gable's 1934 role in ***It Happened One Night***. Michael Jackson laid-out \$1 million for producer David O. Selznick's prize from ***Gone with the Wind*** (*apparently, the only way Jocko would have one*).

Today, Kate Winslet (*best actress*) and Sean Penn (*best actor*) have a new goody at home, as do Penelope Cruz and Heath Ledger's family (*both, best supporting*). They're the only ones the paparazzi are after; all of the rest of those foot-tall mantle-men went home with people you would never pick out of a crowd (*best director? best cinematography? best film editor? best makeup? ad nauseum...*).

This morning, they're rolling-up the red carpet in Hollywood, and getting back to the big-business of Recession '09 (*no winners on that production*).

The big message from last night? The thousands broke into three distinct groups: the observers - both inside and outside the Kodak Theatre; the losers - nominated, but passed-over; and the winners - the few, the proud... and the soon forgotten. It's 2009; the competition has already started again, for next February...

There's another Awards Event planned that will draw an even bigger audience: "...So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 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 5:9-10).

He won't consider roles-on-film; He will evaluate lives-on-earth. The part you and I have been asked to play is to be our self, performing the role we were created by Him to fill, and to do it with an audience of One. His criterion for recognition is just one thing: fruit. "*This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples*" (John 15:8).

The winners head into heaven with rewards, not Oscars. Can't buy 'em; can't sell 'em. Wouldn't part with them, anyway. *Thanks, Hollywood, for showing us a gold-plated version of the real thing...*

Bob Shank

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