

BROCK'S BANTER: Nostalgia ain't what it used to be

By Brock Weir

Nostalgia ain't what it used to be.

Apparently attribution ain't either.

While it is a quote that has been attributed to several thinkers and speak-before-you-thinkers like musician Stan Kenton, late baseball great Yogi Berra, French actress Simone Signoret, and even American humourist Will Rogers, it is a quote that holds true.

Nostalgia really ain't what it used to be ? just ask Sylvester Stallone, who left the Dolby Theatre Oscarless on Sunday night, despite being the clear frontrunner in the race for the Best Supporting Actor trophy for breathing new life into 80s icon Rocky Balboa.

Or ask the people who Netflixed all through the weekend ? without any chill whatsoever ? binge-watching Fuller House, the follow-up that nobody asked for to the semi-hit 90s sitcom Full House.

To hear the feedback from those who hunkered down to watch the entire season in one sitting, you could be mistaken for believing Full House was an opus of a television classic on par with the likes of I Love Lucy, The Dick Van Dyke Show, or even The Sopranos with inexplicably popular-yet-talentless twins in place of a crime family.

But, they're talking about Full House, a sitcom which was almost universally compared unfavourably to a cheese platter by the time I was in elementary school. Over time, it has, apparently, become a conduit for people to recapture their lost ? or what remains of their ? youth.

I'm not prepared though to leave the blame entirely on Bob Saget's doorstep. After all, we have recently had revivals of other shows from the relatively recent past, ranging from the great (Arrested Development), to the good (The X-Files), the meh? (Girl Meets World), and the bad (see above).

It's a trend and we have to live with it.

I've often wondered why certain things from the past, whatever the quality, seem to acquire a romantic patina over the years. People often claim to hunger for the ?good old days?, or ?a simpler time?, but there was never an old day that was uniformly good or simple.

Each decade, almost from the dawn of time, has been punctured by racial strife, inequity, oppression, and unrest. Like death and taxes, they are inescapable factors. Life, no matter how hard you try to convince yourself, was never like the world of Ward and June Cleaver where mom was home all day with the kids, vacuuming in her heels, pearls and, to paraphrase the neighbour kid, a very lovely dress, just waiting for dad to come home with the proverbial bacon and a life lesson.

And yet, I too sometimes long for a simpler time ? especially when I watch the U.S. Presidential Election unfold, despite my better judgement.

Taking the Democrats out of the equation for the moment, as they both have two solid, well-educated and well-meaning candidates vying for their attention, what we have on the other side is an endless cacophony of one man hogging all the oxygen in the room two runners-up left gasping for breath.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have had the front runner, Donald Trump, in an unlikely feud with Pope Francis, of all people, followed by an endorsement from the head of the Ku Klux Klan (which took him a good long while to denounce), a retweet of a quote from Benito Mussolini (for which, at press time, he remains unrepentant), and the masses are lapping it up.

As quickly as the masses are lapping it up, the candidate is just as quick to keep ladling it on, creating an endless cycle of stupidity and nonsense with little regard to what would actually benefit the American people, those countries with whom the United States has closer relations, and indeed the world.

To hear from those lapping it up, Donald Trump seems to have tapped into an unexpected thirst for nostalgia.

While he has yet to define just how he is going to do it, somehow he has convinced Republican voters that he is going to bring the United States back to its glory days ? whatever that is, whenever that was ? and restore the ?American Dream?, although he has yet to define what that actually means in this day and age.

It doesn't matter.

Details aren't needed.

The United States was once the most influential player on the world stage (still is, but other countries are gaining on it) but, dammit, the star of The Celebrity Apprentice is just the guy to restore them to their rightful place in the world, just as he guided contestants Piers Morgan, Bret Michaels, Arsenio Hall, and Leeza Gibbons to the top of the Fortune rankings and Vanity Fair's annual list of the

?New Establishment.? Oh, wait?

It will be interesting to see if this sense of nostalgia hops their northern frontier in Canada.

Of course, those bleeding blue in these parts might argue it already has, as of last October, with the election of Justin Trudeau to lead the nation, but the proper litmus test might come in the replacement of the leader Trudeau the Younger sent packing back to Alberta. Television personality Kevin O'Leary has sent up balloons to gauge the weather in throwing himself into the ring to fill the void left by Stephen Harper.

In fact, he is also hedging his bets by throwing his name into the mix to replace Justin Trudeau, even though he is not even six months into his majority debate.

By his own admission, he is an ?opportunist? and has burst on the scene with as much bluster and bravado as Trump, his fellow reality TV personality from another network.

Threatening to be the ?thorn? in side of Finance Minister Bill Morneau in the years ahead, he basically stopped one step short of calling him a ?loser?, but one can only assume it is only a matter of time.

Personally, I think it is simple ?opportunism? at play here rather than any serious intention to be a voice for the Canadian taxpayer. Perhaps I am a bit naïve, but I like to believe Canadian voters are more in tune with the world and are less likely to pick up the spoon and binge on Trump-brand Pablum.

If anything, I am nostalgic for the days when people entered the race for our top public jobs with a platform, a sound plan, and a vision ? whether you agreed with it or not ? for a better world rather than self-aggrandizement at the expense of diplomacy and people as a whole.

Then again, did we ever have those days?

Is nostalgia ever what it once was?