

1/3/08

### **POLITICS IN IOWA IS POOR THEATRE, SAYS PORTER**

“I loved directing THE MUSIC MAN,” said Dr. Steven Porter, independent candidate for Congress in the 3<sup>rd</sup> district of Pennsylvania. “Meredith Willson’s ‘valentine to America,’ as he called it, was a cleverly crafted blend of satire and music which has delighted audiences for more than fifty years, and I suspect will delight them for many years to come. That is because it is good theatre. The River City, Iowa of Willson’s libretto captured the wholesome panoply of our heartland with a warmth and wit of enduring skill.

“Compared to THE MUSIC MAN, the farce of the current Iowa primary is theatre at its worst. Mudslinging, ballyhooing, and pandering politics—that is what we’re watching in Iowa today. Nary a discussion of substance. Nary a well-articulated position on the critical issues of our time. Just inane candidates and inane pundits telling us how our nation and our world will be affected by a scant minority of voters who turn out for an arcane process in a state with hardly any population,” said Porter, speaking from his home today.

“And the money! Fifty million dollars spent in Iowa so far. Fifty million dollars of attacks and thirty-second sound bytes. For fifty million dollars, one would think the theatre might be a little better, a little more meaningful. Tell me, does anyone really know how Obama will solve the turmoil in Iraq? Does anyone really know what Huckabee intends to do to fix the immigration problem?

“Well, my friend. You got trouble...I say, trouble right there in River City...with a capitol T and that rhymes with P and that stands for Politics in America—the cheapest, most meaningless way to govern a nation or improve a world which stands on the precipice of its own destruction.

“To mix my metaphors and quote a drama instead of a musical, frankly, my dear, I don’t give a damn about what is going on in Iowa. What I would like to see is a reasoned, extensive discussion of the issues (terrorism, Social Security, health care, energy, ecology, globalization, immigration, etc. etc.) by each of the candidates of both parties—interviewed by reporters who can do more than pass a beauty contest—so that the voters might decide things by inspecting ideas instead of primary trends.

“Perhaps our nation and our world are beset with so much trouble because we are so susceptible to cheap theatre. In the end, collectively speaking, we get what we deserve.”