

## Duffy's Iowa Caucus Cartoons: Watch 'Em Run

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*Duffy's Iowa Caucus Cartoons: Watch 'Em Run*, by Brian Duffy. Iowa and the Midwest Experience Series. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016. xiv, 172 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$21.00 paperback.

Reviewer Tom Morain is a former administrator of the State Historical Society of Iowa and director of history at Living History Farms in Des Moines. He recently retired as director of government relations at Graceland University but continues as a consultant.

*Iowa's Caucus Cartoons* is to political junkies what a high school yearbook is to a 50-year class reunion. Flipping the pages, one sees whimsical caricatures of the famous and the wannabees that resurrect long-dormant memories. A yearbook makes no attempt to analyze the educational attainments of the innocent faces staring back from the pages. Nor does Duffy make a similar effort. Yet they both start the wheels turning for those who lived, and sometimes endured, the intense battle for a very small sample of Iowa voters.

Political cartoons both as an art form and as political commentary require some common ground between cartoonist and reader. First, readers need to have some degree of familiarity with the subject material, whether issues or politicians. There has to be at least some fundamental understanding of whom or what the cartoon is about. Neither a caricature nor a spoof works unless one understands the real thing. Fortunately, Brian Duffy had a perfect audience for his artistic commentaries. Readers of the *Des Moines Register* are inundated every four years (for what often seems like the entire four years) with presidential hopefuls testing the waters of the Iowa caucuses. Other areas of the country may not be paying attention to issues or even to who is running within five days after the midterm elections, but Iowa readers do or will soon learn to.

*Watch 'Em Run* is a primer on U.S. presidential politics dating back to 1972. A foreword by David Yepsen, the *Register's* former chief political reporter, provides a brief background on how the Iowa caucuses rose to such importance in the early 1970s and how the two political parties partnered to enhance their significance. Duffy himself provides an explanation of the process of selecting delegates to the party's national convention and the logistical differences between the Republican and Democratic processes.

Duffy moves chronologically through the campaigns. His sketches include snapshots of very early days in the campaigns when many a politician held an inflated vision of their appeal beyond their loyal followers. The cartoons are familiar, dredging up memories buried under candidate foibles and election night details after the shouting had left Iowa. Dick Gephardt, Elizabeth Dole, Steve Forbes, Pat Buchanan,

Howard Dean? They all had their moments in the Iowa sun (at least the Iowa January sun), but who remembers them now?

Political caricature is an art. Duffy manages to exaggerate some physical characteristic and make it forever the candidate's distinguishing feature. Jimmy Carter has an enormous toothy smile. George W. Bush sports pointy ears. Michael Dukakis has heavy dark eyebrows. Duffy claims that John Glenn was the hardest candidate to draw, but fortunately he could put him in an astronaut's suit. It is worth noting that Duffy's depictions are not cruel. They may not be how the candidate would choose to be presented—Governor Terry Branstad is characteristically short—but they never highlight a disability or a serious embarrassment.

There is no doubt that visuals carry a punch that is hard to achieve in words. They often crystallize what readers are already thinking. In 1988 the seven Democratic candidates became Duffy's "seven dwarfs," none of whom had much stature overall or even in comparison with the others. Gary Hart's sexual misadventures earned him a new dwarf handle, "Sleazy."

Older political junkies will love the book. Regardless of what happened to their candidates in the caucuses or on election night, Duffy's cartoons bring back the opening minutes of an exciting game.

*Railroaders without Borders: A History of the Railroad Development Corporation*, by H. Roger Grant. Railroads Past & Present. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. xii, 234 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Kevin Byrne is professor emeritus of history at Gustavus Adolphus College. His research and writing have focused on military history and the history of technology and railroads.

H. Roger Grant is one of America's most able and prolific railroad historians, having authored more than 30 books on the subject. He adds to that reputation in this volume while moving in a fresh direction. Rather than elaborate on the history of bygone carriers, as he has frequently done, his topic is the history of an existing, tight-knit enterprise that invests in and manages shortline and regional railroads in need of rejuvenation: the Railroad Development Corporation (RDC). Founded in 1987 by Henry Posner III, RDC mirrors his global vision, operating railroads on four continents. Grant undertook this study at Posner's request, but he recounts failures as well as victories and scrupulously documents his analysis, drawing on a wide variety of print sources—newspapers, industry publications, books, articles, and materials in RDC's superb archives—and on numerous interviews with key actors. A seasoned