

Written by Allan Besselink
Sunday, 24 November 2013 23:36

[!\[\]\(919a2cb85b99741a73c0c31a427236a8_img.jpg\)](http://commons.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rhubarb_in_Borough_Market.jpg) I can say that the year 2013 has set a new standard. As hard as it is for me to believe, I actually heard Christmas music while grocery shopping early this month. Yes, I am serious. There is nothing like having 8 weeks of lead time to get you into the Christmas spirit.

But before we forge into December, we will experience Thanksgiving. What are you giving thanks for this year? That is definitely something to ponder over that second plate of turkey and stuffing.

Meanwhile, it's time for another episode of the Rhubarb Report. Grab a plate and dig in.

1. Year two of **Formula One in Austin** was a great experience as expected. The weather was fantastic, and the spectacle of F1 - the sound, the technology, the experience - was impressive as always.

But after qualifying, I was left to wonder how the time gap from 1st to 3rd was 0.8 seconds. That is an eternity by F1 standards, especially this far into the season. There was 0.1 second between first and second (the two Red Bulls), but then there was a full 0.7 seconds back to Romain Grosjean in 3rd. Then a measly 1.0 second blanketed 3rd through 12th.

At the highest level of this sport, 0.5 seconds is huge. Of course, F1 is renowned for teams finding ways to work within the strict wording of the rules but perhaps not the full intent of the rules. We may never know how they found the better part of a full second since August. But I for one certainly have to wonder.

2. And while we're speaking of F1, today marked the final race of the season in Brazil - and **Mark Webber's official retirement** from Formula One. Although he had the best F1 machinery under him for the past few years, he was also teammate to Sebastian Vettel, the Red Bull prodigy that had bushels of money and support behind him along the way. The harsh reality was that Webber was always going to be the de-facto number 2 driver, even in the same equipment.

Webber's race craft, driving skill, and personality will be sorely missed in the F1 paddock. Cheers, mate.

3. Finally, Friday November 22nd was the **fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy** in Dallas. Just uttering that phrase is difficult. Fifty years. I wasn't even a glimmer in my mother's eye in 1963. But Kennedy's impact on our collective psyche remains to this day.

Kennedy's tour on that fateful would have eventually ended up in Austin. He was scheduled to speak to the Texas Democratic State Committee. If you've not read his [undelivered speech 11/22/1963](http://mcadams.posc.mu.edu/austinspeech.htm), you should. Here are his concluding remarks -

"Almost everywhere we look, the story is the same. In Latin America, in Africa, in Asia, in the councils of the world and in the jungles of far-off nations, there is now renewed confidence in our country and our convictions.

For this country is moving and it must not stop. It cannot stop. For this is a time for courage and a time for challenge. Neither conformity nor complacency will do. Neither the fanatics nor the faint-hearted are needed. And our duty as a party is not to our party alone, but to the Nation, and, indeed., to all mankind. Our duty is not merely the preservation of political power but the preservation of peace and freedom.

So let us not be petty when our cause is so great. Let us not quarrel amongst ourselves when our Nation's future is at stake. Let us stand together with renewed confidence in our cause--united in our heritage of the past and our hopes for the future--and determined that this land we love shall lead all mankind into new frontiers of peace and abundance."

Kennedy's words - the

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words he would never have the opportunity to share with us - serve as a reminder of what we were, what we are, and what we can still be.</p> <p>Photo credits: Wikipedia</p> <h6>Related Articles By Allan Besselink</h6> Rhubarb Report 079 Rhubarb Report 078 Rhubarb Report 077