



# The Bunkhouse Chronicle

Craig Rullman  
Columnist

## No decision

The political parties, for many of us, are increasingly irrelevant.

The problem is, they don't seem to represent the very many of us who feel that certain planks of the platforms on either side could be combined to make a much more interesting, relevant — and moderate — political party.

For instance, I'm for guns, lots of them, but I'm also for women's reproductive rights. Under the current arrangement, I don't get to have them both. Isn't that just stupid?

If I want to have my ARs, and also want a woman to be in charge of her own decisions, I have to become a Libertarian, which means I will never actually be

represented in a government body. And let's be honest, the best thing about the Libertarian Party is their convention, which reserves a few seats for the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster and its adherents, those crazy Pastafarians.

Just once, I'd like to vote for somebody that actually wins.

This year I was all set to vote for Jim Webb, who claims one of the more impressive résumés in the field, is capable of writing — and reading — his own speeches, hasn't foreclosed on little old ladies or enjoyed wink-wink windfalls in cattle futures, and who seemed to best represent my personal points of view across the broad spectrum: He likes guns and women, too.

But Jim doesn't look great on television; a bit too laconic, perhaps, and anyway the Democrats had already anointed Ms. Clinton, who appears to have magically escaped a stretch at Lewisburg, where she might have manicured lawns with the ghost of Martha Stewart.

Bernie made a lot of Ms. Clinton's fans — a blinkered crowd if there ever was one — nervous for a while, but his effect on the Republicans

was probably worse, as they watched even moderate Democrats become hand-wringing Bolsheviks in the space of only a few months.

And nobody really likes Trump. Not even the millions who will vote for him, who hopefully harbor some degree of fear that he actually is as appalling and narcissistic as he sounds, a kind of lunatic Mr. Toad rampaging around Toad Hall with bright orange hair.

I'd love to figure out how we got here, this mess we are still, in all seriousness, calling an election — though it's a big smelly onion. A nation of 323 million people it seems ought somehow to arrive at a set of candidates less obviously corrupt, self-obsessed, arrogant, or just outright annoying.

Strangely, we know exactly what we are getting with the Clinton, which is problematic, but with Trump we actually have no idea what we are getting — no less of a problem. The parties have gone bipolar, and to drill down on that diagnosis, with psychotic features.

Alexis de Tocqueville, who was probably the finest observer of America in its infancy, publishing "Democracy in America" in 1835, saw the same

problems as he travelled the country. "I do not know if the people of the United States would vote for superior men if they ran for office, but there can be no doubt that such men do not run," he tells us — and it's hard to escape the notion that we have the same problem now, 181 years later.

If anything, one might suppose that the problem is actually worse.

I blame Facebook. I would also like to lump in CNN, FOX, and disgraced anchorman Brian Williams, though in fairness, his "rocket-fire" claim was not substantially more outlandish than Ms. Clinton's Bosnian "sniper-fire" boast. I hold them all equally accountable, and in equal disgust. Facebook because it has memes, a veritable tsunami of them, which finishes the lousy reporting job — and by lousy I mean miniature — done by all of the others. As if we could somehow understand complex issues or the character of candidates between commercials for Pampers and Viagra — the target demographic, apparently — or by listening to the shouting matches between pundits with too much makeup.

Surely, somehow, we can

do better than this.

I still don't know who I'm going to vote for — but it won't be one of the cartoon characters who at this very minute are angrily Twittering each other to death.

On the last ballot I wrote in General Mattis for every position, but that was my protest vote. I don't really want the Warrior Monk in the oval office. What I do want is someone reasonable, untainted by criminal investigations or unsavory business dealings, a representative with integrity, strength, and intellect who understands that their job is to defend the Constitution and the individual liberties it guarantees, and who is able in some way to help re-unite our increasingly angry and fragmented country.

Maybe that person exists in politics, but they won't be on this year's ballot.

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