

## Political parties: can you tell Republicans and Democrats apart

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Staff Writer

Republicans and Democrats. You know the rivalry between these two political parties that for about 14 decades served as the cornerstone of the American system. You know their symbols. Heck, you might even be able to tell the difference between the two parties.

Shyah, right! Republicans and Democrats? More like Coke and Pepsi. I drink both Coca-Cola and Pepsi; believe me, I don't notice much of a difference. And so it is with Republicans and Democrats: just when you think you have these parties figured out, BLAM! Something happens that screws up the theory. You have Republicans voting like Democrats and vice versa, for starters. There was a time in the illustrious history of our country when just by their campaign platforms you could tell these two long-standing brand names apart. But like I said, these days "Republican" and "Democrat" are anymore just a pair of brand names.

You might wonder what that has to do with my opinion. So I thought I'd divulge: our current two-party system is quickly becoming overkill. All these parties will do, all they've shown me they can do well, is argue with each other. And when they argue, it's safe to say for the most part, the controlling party will make the laws. Occasionally those laws will differ from the political parties' normal positions (if, after all the arguing they've been doing between each other, they have any). And also now and again, those laws will differ from what the American citizenry will really want. Especially when during the arguing, they tie up some important pieces of legislation.

What, if anything, can be done about it? I think we'd be better off with political parties whose labels are more than just brand names. The advent of some of these so-called "third parties" should serve some notice to us that Republican-Democrat bickering is starting to wear some politically active people's patience a little thin. There have been two traditional problems with this theory: first, when attention arises from the new political party, Republicans and Democrats quickly jump on that bandwagon and adopt it as their own, thus reducing the influ-

ence of the third party. Second, there's been this aversion to multiple parties that arises from the fear of having to resort to coalitions of two or more parties to obtain a controlling majority.

Another set of politically active human beings seek "non-partisanship" on some elected positions, most notably elective judicial positions and local (i.e. municipal and county) political offices. If "Republican" and "Democrat" are the established brand names of the American political system, "non-partisans" are the generic brand. The chief problem: in the marketplace, people psychologically tend to identify more with the brand names than with the generic or the house brands. In the political arena, there's no difference. Without a label like, say, Democrat or Republican, voters tend not to hear as much about these candidates and much as the major parties' choices.

What can be done about these problems? For fearing about multiparty coalitions, remember: to the neighbors of ours across the pond who proudly call themselves Europeans, multiparty coalitions are nothing new; in fact, anymore it's standard practice.

As for non-partisanship: again, using the marketplace analogy, generic brands tend to be more of a bargain than the nationally (or internationally) known brands. Perhaps that's the case in the political arena as well: without the major-party identification, the non-partisan candidate also identifies less with the Democrat-Republican bickering. So the potential voter tends to see a lot less of an image of a candidate, painted by either his/her political party or that of the opposing candidate, and more about the candidate's actual platform. Isn't solving problems, on whatever level you choose to run, what entering the political arena is really all about?

Furthermore, let's take the "non-partisan office" thing to the next level. Let's make political offices—let's say state legislature or even the governorship—non-partisan. Let's cut through the bickering between those Pachyderms and those Donkeys. Let's take this revolutionary idea to the national level. Diminish the

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power of political parties from the floor of the House and the Senate, if not altogether eliminate the parties.

You could go to the other extreme: having at least three or four political parties, each one representing a different political theory (to suit each part of the political spectrum), coexisting while running the state or country. If you really want to cut through partisan bickering, create a situation which coerces it. The probability that political party will gain a majority and therefore control legislature diminish greatly with the more political parties that are represented. With only two political parties, one political party being in the majority is a nearly 100% certainty. But with each new political party that enters, this probability is greatly reduced, since each new party as a rule siphons off support from the established parties. People do get sick and tired of the same ol' Pachyderm-Donkey status quo and therefore will look for alternatives.

If all you want to do is argue, why enter politics? If you want to solve problems through politics, don't argue like you have nothing better to do; do something.

### Attention Crafters!

We are planning our annual Christmas Craft Fair. The Fair will be held in the Community Center on Monday, Nov. 24, from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. If you make hand made items that you would like to sell, contact Michelle in the Student Activities office CC140 at ext. 2245 for more information. Space is limited, so call early! (Deadline is Oct. 27)

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“ At Clackamas, whether you need a place to study or play, you're going to be in good hands. ”

Jacob Boenisch  
ASG President

## Students anxious for the return of game room and study areas

Student space on campus is at an all time low. The lost use of three of the out buildings has brought new hardships and challenges to the college and the students that attend here. The two issues that I want to address are study areas and a game room.

Study areas are important. Study time allows students to catch up on reading before class or to consult with other students on the latest lesson. Ever since the onset of problems with the buildings, the administration, with the help of Mr. Pantages leadership class have made available study carrels all around campus. It is my hope that these carrels will remain when more quiet and group study facilities open back up in the newly constructed library. This will give students more study space than they have ever had. On the decline and in danger of elimination is the extremely important space for student recreation.

Two years ago there was a room in Randall dedicated to student recreation. This room had pool tables, video games, and a popular popcorn machine. When buildings started to be shut down for repair the student activity office voluntarily gave the room over for a temporary classroom. Due to the space restrictions, the student activities office decided to take sacrifices in order to elevate the pressure. Now as the buildings are near completion, there has been talk of keeping this precious student space as a classroom. I have received many requests from students asking to restore this game room. It is in the best interest of this school to give students a place to hang out and relax.

I hope that as we move closer to the middle of the term that you will find time to relax and know that at Clackamas, whether you need a place to study or play, that you are going to be in good hands.