

Roots in Ripon

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Chuck Roots

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Can't Make This Up

Mercifully the political conventions for the two parties are over for this laughable partisan brouhaha season which the electorate is forced to endure every four years.

A special honor should be attributed to those hearty souls who sit up each night of the two weeks of festivities and political attacks, watching the parade of political wonks, has-been politicians, up-and-coming political stars, and celebrities from Tinseltown. I can't help but feel as though the conventions are self-serving. That is to say, they are created and conducted for those in attendance. Or as we say within the Christian faith, "You're preaching to the choir." Those of us in TV Land are merely spectators, allowed to peak into a world that seems very fascinating yet strange to us. Something akin to going to the zoo, only the animals in the zoo are normally better behaved.

Vindictive, vitriolic, abusive and defamatory words and attributes are leveled at anyone who dares to disagree with the vaunted leaders of the opposing party. Now that the two presidential candidates from the Republican and Democratic Parties are validated by their delegates, the real claws and fangs come out. For the next three months we will be subjected to a haranguing by each candidate toward the other. Listening to the rhetoric from the two parties painting the other's party as the worst possible political organization since Genghis Khan roamed the Steppes of Russia.

Aside from voting along party lines in sycophantic fashion, if you're like me you have to be asking yourself, "Are these two presidential candidates the best we can produce?"

For those of you who have followed my column during the past 13+ years, you know that I am conservative when it comes to my faith, politics and overall philosophy of life. Though I grew up in a home where my mother and step father were Democrats, I found myself at odds with the philosophy of the Democratic Party. Crushed after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, I found myself adrift politically. I liked what I heard coming from Senator Barry Goldwater who was the Republican nominee in 1964. On the other hand, I did not like President Lyndon Johnson at all. Over the years I have watched the Democratic Party shift further and further to the left to the point that JFK would not be welcomed into his own party. The Republican Party has also shifted to the left, just not nearly as far as the Democrats have.

Conservatives today are viewed as Neanderthals which is unfortunate since most of us in the conservative ranks are simply trying to hold to the Constitution. There is a point where you draw a line in the sand declaring you will not compromise your beliefs – period.

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So then, you see that I do not line up with the Democratic party. Plus, there is no way on God's green earth that I could ever pull the lever for Hillary Clinton. I first questioned her truthfulness when she stated that husband Bill's sexual exploits did not bother her. Second, she said she was named after the famous New Zealand explorer, Sir Edmund Hillary, the first person to successfully climb Mount Everest on May 29, 1953 – when Hillary Clinton (Née Rodham) was nearly six years old! But the real show-stopper for me was Benghazi. As a 34-year retired veteran of the Marine Corps and Navy, need I say more?

Conversely for the Republican Party, Donald Trump angered me from the get-go in this presidential race when he chose, for whatever his reasons, to attack Senator John McCain's military service, stating that the senator was not a hero. Just as a reminder, John McCain was shot down over North Vietnam, suffering serious physical injury. He then spent five and a half years in a POW camp, euphemistically known as "Hanoi Hilton." He endured daily beatings at the hands of his captors. And as the war was drawing to an end, he was offered an early release which would have allowed him to be home with his family for Christmas. When he learned that the other POWs were not being offered the same opportunity, McCain refused, choosing to stay until all were released. And Trump says John McCain is not a hero? Senator McCain and I do not line up very well politically, but this man has more courage than ten men. Mr. Trump should have valued the sacrifice of Senator McCain's service.

Next week I will come at this election season from another angle: Who, if anyone, I choose to vote for and why.