

INDEX

Opinion 44
Obituaries 324
Sports 15
Wise Business... 114



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The Kari Klement Butlerfield Stage Days PPACA Rodeo is this weekend in Bridgeport. What is your favorite rodeo event and why? See a related story on page 2A.

MENTAL TOUGHNESS
Declarator Eagle A.J. Johnson has weathered criticism and basked in the glory of the spring spotlight on the baseball diamond. See Sports, page 1B.



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81

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OPINION

WHAT? You're NOT Voting?!!!!



Not voting reflects selfishness

BY D.A. SHARPE

This 2016 presidential election year has been among the most unusual in memory, both for Democrats and for Republicans.

Let's examine some of the reactions being heard from the frustrated or confused.

The Democratic Party primary election has had up to eight presidential candidates this season, but the thrust boils down to two candidates — Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders. Clinton represents the stability of the Democratic Party, and Sanders represents the taking over from those who follow the status quo.

The Generation Y voters, those born generally 1980 and after, have influenced greatly the Democratic Party race, being attracted to political solutions providing the most for seemingly the most people.

The Republican Party primary election has had up to 17 presidential candidates on its ballots.

Most have reflected aspects of Republican Party stability and status quo, but one, Donald Trump, is a non-politician who has struck a responsive chord among voters of Republican sentiments who have felt that its political leadership has not heard its desires. This group includes a conservative side of the Generation Y or the Millennials.

It now appears that the November general election ballot will have the Democratic Party status quo candidate and that the Republican Party ballot will have the non-politician, non-status quo candidate. Realizing this, a number of voices now are being heard from those not represented on the general election ballot that they are just not going to vote. Or that they will vote for a write-in candidate somehow.

That is the worst thing, in my mind, that thoughtful, registered voters should do! First of all, each voter who would normally vote for his or her party is, in effect,

throwing away the vote, in favor of the opposing party.

Do the Bernie Sanders fans want to enhance Republican opportunities to win in November? I should think not! Likewise, would establishment Republicans want to better the chances of a Democratic Party victory by not voting? No!

There is no history where U.S. presidential write-in candidates made more than a molecule of impact in an election (like 1 percent or less)! There have been third-party candidates, but few in number. Ross Perot is the most recent, running in 1992. His race was significant, in that it garnered about 19 percent of the national presidential vote. That sort of third-party impact had not existed since Teddy Roosevelt ran in 1912 on the Bull Moose Party ticket.

Looking at the 2012 presidential general election results suggests something. Both parties received less votes for its candi-

date than in the 2008 election. However, the drop in Republican votes was significantly greater than the drop in Democratic votes. So, President Obama won.

What did that mean? For one thing, had the same number of Republican votes been cast in 2012 as was cast in 2008, the White House residents would have been changed!

Various commentators analyzed the Republican vote reduction. The predominant discovery was that Republicans who chose not to vote that year (or did the ineffective write-in vote) were largely represented in the demographic group identified as evangelical Christians, who claimed they could not vote, in good conscience, for a Mormon. Mitt Romney, the Republican candidate, was a Mormon.

I confess that I am a Republican voter who generally is fairly conservative in my views. Also, my Christian style is one that is not attracted to the spiritual

merits of Mormonism. However, my personal preference is much greater to have had Romney in office than the Democratic winner! Not voting or voting uselessly for a write-in candidate, does nothing positive for anyone, except to make the self-serving voter to feel good about his or her vote.

That will be the same this year, both for the disaffected Democrats and the disappointed Republicans!

What is the answer? The answer, both to Democrats and to Republicans, is for all to get out and vote for your party's candidate. The candidate with the most votes wins! I find very few voters wishing the other party won.

Don't brag about not voting! You just show your selfishness and your lack of understanding about politics.

D.A. Sharpe is a genealogy and history buff and former chair of the Wise County Republican Party. He's a longtime resident of Aurora.