

What If They Held An Election And No One Voted? by J. Conrad Guest

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IT'S TRUE, the thing that once, two-hundred years ago, set this country apart from others—it's form of government—is what now has set us teetering on the brink.

There are other reasons our society is in decline. Freedom run rampant, a me-first mentality, obsession with youth and beauty and longer lasting erections, our unhappiness despite being the most heavily medicated society on the face of the planet, and for all that supposed connection we have through texting and the Internet, we're more disconnected than we ever have been.

And there is a lack of accountability, and that's something that exists in government, too. That's right, today they sit on opposite sides of the room, Republicans and Democrats (Dumbos and Jackasses), and point fingers and each side blames the other and nothing gets done.

President Obama was recently in Michigan when he blasted Congress:

"There's nothing wrong with our country—there is something wrong with our politics," Obama said at a Johnson Controls Inc. factory that makes lithium-ion batteries for hy-brid and electric vehicles. Obama went on to say that some members of Congress "would rather see their opponents lose than see America win."

Obama's comments were nothing new to me; I've been saying the same thing for twenty years. When you're the president you always have an agenda; when you're an artist who largely writes fiction, you get labeled a curmudgeon.

The problem is that neither side wants to be answerable for what's wrong, and the real losers are the voters.

Each year we head into a voting booth thinking, hoping, that this time we'll get it right. We'll pick the right guy, that finally, someone will make a difference, because the alternative is to wake up to find the last dozen years have been a bad dream.

But after two centuries, our checks and balances form of government become impotent. No one wants to follow leadership and everyone is quick to lay blame elsewhere. And the voters vote largely on faith, a faith that one candidate really is better than another. A faith that is dwindling.

The truth is that greed and corruption in this country, and in our government, have put us into a position where we may topple as the world's superpower.

And you know what? That might not be such a bad thing.

Our way of life is changing. It has been ever since George W. Bush launched his jihad, and it's gotten only worse with the recent Wall Street meltdown and banking fiasco, and we're not yet out of the woods: the government recently raised the debt ceiling, and on and on it goes.

Maybe it's true: every generation has its burden to bear. My parents lived through World War II; their parents faced the Great Depression. The Boomers had Vietnam, and now the Millennium generation will have no Social Security, unaffordable healthcare, and a national debt into the trillions.

Which brings me to the title of his blog: What if they held an election and no one voted?

I've heard it said that it's a right to vote in this country, and that by refraining from voting I give up my right to complain. I used to espouse that belief myself; but not anymore. Now I believe in the power of the non-voter.

Think about it. When was the last time you voted for one candidate over another? I can't in good conscience say that I've voted *for* any candidate in the past twenty years. I will say, however, that I've voted *against* a good many.

What's that say about our political system when voters don't vote for the best candidate but instead against the greater of two evils? Frankly, in 2008 I could've voted against either candidate for a host of reasons. Yet I couldn't find many reasons to vote *for* either one.

Maybe we need to stay home on election day. What better message to send political hopefuls than our dissatisfaction with the current two-party system, that the job they're doing sucks, that we're tired of government corruption, gridlock on Capitol Hill, and that we won't take it anymore?



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