

Election Season

Community Comment
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With election season in full swing, the airwaves are full of politics. You can find some serious policy discussion, but not very much. You can find a lot of half-truths and distortions and even outright lies. You can find some yelling and screaming especially on the radio. And, you can find a lot of plain old B.S.

It strikes me that more and more money is being spent to out yell the other guy. In the end, we lose any talk of proposed solutions and get into the character flaws of the opponent.

What is most distressing to me is civil discussion, a conversation with give and take, is almost impossible to have anymore. We have camps now. There is no discussion among friends or family; there is one correct approach and one party or candidate that is the only choice. And we wonder why Washington doesn't work? We don't work anymore. We, the people, have led the way to this stalemate of political solutions. We don't practice civil discourse and we send representative to Congress who will act the same.

A modified form of democracy is dependent on an educated electorate who can select representatives intelligently. That means they, we, have to think about the issues of the day and carefully assess which candidate best represents our point of view. It should be a given that political solutions will involve compromise. This word is a value. There are 300 million of us. Do we really think we can get anything done without the grace of wise and careful compromise? And as our numbers grow, and our population gets more and more diverse, it will get harder to govern, not easier.

Go to a local city council or board of supervisors meeting and you will see how difficult it is for our friends and neighbors who fill these positions to govern the few thousand of us who live here. Creating laws that affect the entire nation are incredibly complex. We need the best people we can get to represent us and we need them to work together. There are times we will simply not be able to compromise and agree on a solution but that cannot be the objective. When it is, it works to the detriment of you and me and our country.

I was at my regular Rotary Meeting on Wednesday and was reminded of one of the best features of Rotary at least as it is practiced here, We are a service club dedicated to solving problems. We leave our political ideology at the door. We have the luxury to do this because we are not in the business of governing. Somehow, our politicians must once again find a way to work towards the common good. If you think our issues are difficult, our founders found a way to establish this government and write a constitution.

We can't control the media or the rest of the electorate but we can be the best citizen we can be. Good politics starts with each of us. And part of good politics includes an

understanding that we see things differently. That doesn't make us enemies, it make us Americans.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment. We are all in this together.