

# Election Day Journey



by Butch  
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After all the mudslinging had ceased and the innuendo had subsided, it was time to vote. Now, if I had listened to all the party ads and believed what I had heard, then each candidate was a crook, a degenerate, a liar or worse: a Liberal (heaven forbid!). The barrage of negativity this year was overwhelming. As a rule, I try to ignore this time-honored tradition of bashing your opponent into a pulp, but this year it was nearly impossible to escape.

The frenzy is so dizzying this year, I shut myself off from the whole process about a week ago. Mailboxes full of political flyers hit the recycle bin unread; dozens of messages from Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich and all my other close friends were deleted unheard; Fox News (which I watch occasionally for the entertainment factor), CNN and Local "News" Shows went unwatched; the FM radio in my car was shut off in favor of CDs; the huge newspaper ads went unread. Ahhh! Isolation is attainable when one makes an effort!

I did my homework at my own pace and considered the possibilities. I asked no advice and none was offered. Even in this sterilized environment, it was no easy task to decide between candidates and ballot question alternatives. Sometimes I had to choose between the lesser of two evils.

There is a fire station on Acushnet Avenue that is my polling place. It's made of brick—I think all polling places should be brick, gives the illusion of permanence. Several people stood

outside holding political signs including Councilor John Saunders. We said hello and then I went into the peaceful confines of the little room off to the side of the fire station where it all happens. It was quiet (like the eye of a hurricane) and manned by a few elderly citizens who had donated their time. I was greeted by a smile and a nod from the police officer on duty. After announcing my address and name, I was crossed off the "In" list and handed a ballot.

Off to the serenity of the voting booth: The light was a little dim, but I could read everything. I took my time, enjoying the finality of my decisions and the power I held in my hands in the form a black marker. I made the little unfinished arrows connect, held my nose and voted.

After I placed my ballot into the machine that looks like a macabre jukebox (I was # 389: press play and hear "For What It's Worth" by Buffalo Springfield), I made my way back to my car and headed home feeling good about myself, but not so good about what the process has become.

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