

Nick
WILTGEN

Exclusive parties

Political scales are tipped against outsiders

They say one man's trash is another man's treasure. One man's loss, another man's gain. And so on.

Maybe somebody should check the math. When it comes to this year's political debates, the scales seem to be tipped a bit more steeply.



This summer, a debate for Nebraska's U.S. Senate candidates was canceled

because public television officials didn't want to let Libertarian Party candidate John DeCamp participate. Federal law prohibits public broadcasters from excluding ballot-qualified candidates from debates they sponsor.

More visibly, the Commission on Presidential Debates has flexed its muscle to exclude all third-party candidates from October's presidential and vice-presidential debates. Reform Party candidate Ross Perot has brought the commission's unethical standards into the spotlight, but he's not the only one who's been excluded. Libertarian Party candidate Harry Browne (whom I will be voting for) is, like Perot, on the ballot in all 50 states. Yet he has not only been excluded from the debates, but from most media coverage (the Libertarian Party convention was aired on C-SPAN, but received scant attention from the major television networks).

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Numbers and polls aside, the fact that the commission has chosen to exclude all third-party candidates demonstrates a fundamental corruption of America's democratic process. The U.S. Constitution mentions nothing about political parties. They were not meant to be a defining factor in the mechanisms of democracy and government.

No matter. Clinton and Dole, in their campaign speeches on many other issues, have shown their thorough disregard for the Constitution. Natural Law Party candidate John Hagelin is on the ballot in 45 states, and he has also been excluded.

The Commission denied Perot (not to mention Browne and Hagelin) a spot in the debates because they claim he has "no realistic chance" of winning the election.

Of course, some would say that given his dismal showing in the polls, Bob Dole has no "realistic" chance of winning either. But what exactly is a "realistic chance"? One in three? One in 10? One in 50,000?

Now, their approval of limiting national debates to the two major parties shows another character trait. It's clear that the Democrat and Republican parties are afraid of third parties and afraid of their new ideas. The two major parties know they are running our nation into the ground. So instead of opening dialogue to parties with fresh ideas, they play judge, jury and executioner. They judge third-party candidacies as having "no realistic chance" of winning, declare them guilty of irrelevance, and sentence them to life in the shadows while Clinton and Dole bask in the inherited limelight of political dominance.

Perhaps this year the Commission acted as it did because it knows it won't have another chance to do the same. The cards are stacked against the Democrats and Republicans.

Forty percent of Americans are now registered as Independents, compared to about 30 percent each for the Democrats and Republicans.

(Many of those 40 percent may in spirit be members of third parties, but due to draconian ballot-access restrictions imposed by the two major parties, they cannot register with those parties.)

Furthermore, the advent of the Information Age will further weaken the major parties by decentralizing the information industry. No longer will a few TV networks or a few newspaper or magazine editors decide which political issues capture the public's attention. Anyone with a bone to pick can start up a home page on the World Wide Web and generate public discussion on an honest, grass-roots level, with a wider audience than ordinary citizens could ever have had before.

The Internet is proving to be fertile ground for discussion of new viewpoints on government, politics, and social issues. In fact, Harry Browne leads both Clinton and Dole in several Internet polls — showing that when third parties are visible, they can be powerful. And that is exactly why Democrats and Republicans are recoiling in fear, claws extended, to prevent anyone from stealing their thunder.

And so there will be only Clinton and Dole debating on TV on Oct. 6. A big gain for two men. But a big loss for the other 259,999,998 of us.

By my calculations, that's 129,999,999 people's loss for one man's gain.

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Macarena massacre

The 'Hokey Pokey' of the '90s must die now

Let me tell you a story...

Once upon a time there was a boy who took a week to scale the tallest mountain in the world. Upon pulling his weary body onto the final ledge, he found a half-naked old man.

The boy asked: "Wise old man, can you tell me the secret of life?" The old man shook his head.

The boy pondered, "Can you tell me how to meet women?"

Once again the old man shook his head.

The boy now grew frustrated. "Fine then, what can you tell me?"

The old man smiled. "I can tell you a secret that will bring you all the happiness you seek."

Upon consideration, the boy decided not to push the old man off the ledge and instead asked, "What's the catch?"

"You must survive one of two tortures. If you can, all you desire shall be yours."

The young man nodded. "Name them."

"Jump off this ledge or dance the Macarena."

Thirty seconds later there was a sound that echoed through all the

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land. It bounced off mountain walls, became lost in deep dark caves and confused all who heard it. It sounded sort of like, well, like...

Splat. The old man grimaced. "Damn. That was the fourth one this week."

The Macarena. If you haven't done it, consider yourself a lucky human being.

Everyone else has. Everyone? Yeah, everyone.

Delegates did it at the Democratic National Convention. A packed Yankee stadium did it during the seventh-inning stretch. All the MTV VJs did it in a commercial. Even Al Gore, Bob Dole and Saddam Hussein have done it in recent editorial cartoons.

My question is ... for the love of God — WHY?!

You see, I'm not in love with the Macarena. I'm not in love with the song, the girls in the video, the actual dance itself or the 60-year-old

women I saw on TV trying to do it. I want one and only one thing: its death.

Yes, I officially call for the death of the Macarena. The song has been on the Billboard charts for 36 weeks now — some condoms don't even have a shelf life of that long.

The Macarena had its moment. Now it deserves to join the ranks of Billy Ray Cyrus' "Achy Breaky Heart" dance and the '80s fad of break-dancing.

Yet the question arises — how do we kill the Macarena? My solution is to create a new shooting video game that would rival the latest editions of Area 51 or Lethal Enforcers.

I call it: *Shoot the Macarena*. The object of the game is to shoot any person doing the Macarena. You'd also be allowed to shoot people singing the Macarena, buying the single or those who are attempting to show others how the Macarena is

done.

The final level? You square off against every chick in that "Macarena" video and go face to face with the "Bayside Boys," those two old guys in the video who couldn't lip-sync to save their families.

By the way, if for some crazy reason you do want to learn how to do the Macarena before my loyal followers destroy it, follow these easy steps:

1. Go to a disco.
2. Wait for "Macarena" to play (you will recognize it because it will be played every second song).
3. Put your right palm in the air.
4. Put your left palm in the air.
5. Put your right hand in your pocket.
6. Dislodge the concealed firearm.
7. Find the DJ.
8. Shoot the DJ.
9. Repeat.

With these easy-to-follow steps, you'll make the most of the Macarena while it's still around. Just don't forget the ammo, because fads tend to take a lot of slugs before they bite the dust...

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