



If You Can't Beat 'Em, Join 'Em! The Only Way Voters of Elbert Can Get Better Candidates

Sign Up by Friday May 25th

by Manly Balzac

Now is the time for all good Democrats and Independents to come to the aid of the Republicans. That's right, I said it! If you are as sick and tired as I am of being sick and tired of Elbert County being run by a bunch of well entrenched political hacks in a rigged party system, it is time to help our Republican brethren oust the old guard. It is time for a new breed of politics in Elbert County that represents everybody and not just those who are on the friends list of Scott Wills and Bill Harris. If you can't beat 'em, then it is, by Gawd, time to join 'em!

For the better part of two decades, the leadership of the GOP in Elbert County has been serving up a very narrow menu of choices for their followers from which to choose. During this same period of time, the Republicans have not feared any substantive challenge from the Democrats. This fact is not because the Democrats have not put up worthy or qualified candidates, because they have. No, this is about the polarization of American politics trickling down to the county level where in this county, the Republicans outnumber the Democrats by nearly a three to one margin. Crow all they want about their American values, the GOP in Elbert could have run almost anyone for elected offices with an "R" behind their names and still been the dominant party over the past twenty years.

This election season is very different. This year something new is on the horizon and it should bring hope to every voter in Elbert county no matter what their party affiliation currently is. The rank and file Republicans have seen fit to put two good Republicans on the ticket to challenge the two sitting commissioners who are currently up for reelection, Del Schwab (R), District 1 and John Shipper (R), District 3. It is a known fact that the leadership of the Elbert County Republican party despises any challenge to its authority on election matters, but both Larry Ross (R), District 3 and Robert Rowland (R), District 1 pose a real threat to throw a monkey wrench into the old GOP machinery if one or both of these candidates prevails in the upcoming primary election.

Why do I say this? The answer is simple. Both Ross and Rowland answer questions. When you ask them a question, they answer it even if you might not get the answer you would like to hear. If they cannot answer your question, they will tell you that they can't but will get back to you with their answer when they have looked into the matter. Shipper and Schwab almost never answer questions. The sitting commissioners have made an art form out of giving their constituents three minutes to speak their mind and then blatantly refusing to answer an honest question. They offer the pat answer, "Fill out an open records request." Their attitude is simply that it is none of your business. If you don't believe that, you have never sat through any contentious issues brought before the BOCC in the past four years. If that does not suit your picture of Shipper and Schwab, you have never seen them red in the face with anger when a citizen dares question them on the Sunshine Laws. Why should they have to speak when they can use our taxpayer dollars to have their attorney talk down to us?

There is a primary election coming up on June 26, 2012 here in Elbert County. In my many years out here as a resident, I cannot think of an election with more far reaching consequences than the one in front of us. It is my opinion that the Republicans AND the Elbert County Democrats and Independents should have a say in who makes it onto the ballot for the two commissioner races scheduled for this next November election.

We, Democrats and Independents, need to change our party affiliations and become Republicans **FOR THE PRIMARY ELECTION ONLY** so that for once, everybody outside the Elbert County Republican leadership has a chance to voice one clear truth. We, the citizens of Elbert County deserve the best candidates the Republican Party has to offer.

Let this primary election be the turning point in Elbert County government where the voters have real choice.

Suffice it to say, some will be aghast at the suggestion that voters change their party affiliation on both sides of the political aisle. Some will say it is a cowardly act, a trick, a fiction or even illegal. It is not. It is just one of the remaining choices left to a population that is being misled and horribly mismanaged by a rigged political machine. If we do not stand up now, then when? We are already on the brink of financial catastrophe. Our services have been cut to the bone. Spending is higher than ever and revenues are down. Punitive revenue streams in the form of traffic tickets and rubbish fines are the best these commissioners have to offer. What have we got to lose, Elbert? **Change your party affiliation today.** You can always change back after the election season is over. In the general election in November, one can vote for any candidate REGARDLESS of party--this re-registration does not change that! The difference will be that you might just help to put Elbert County back on the rails.

Imagine an important election such as the one in November where your vote counted for something. Imagine having a good Republican, Larry Ross running against a good Democrat, Lark House Fogel in District 3. Imagine a good Republican, Robert Rowland running against a good Democrat, Jill Duvall in District 1. This creates a WIN-WIN situation! You would not have to hold your nose if you pulled the lever for any of these fine candidates. Imagine knowing for the first time in twenty years that whomever wins the election, no matter their party affiliation, they will be dedicated to answering questions, solving problems and taking input from the county residents. It is possible.

The 2008 primary election results tell a dramatic story. Del Schwab beat his opponent Steve Valdez by 523 votes in the District 1 Republican primary election. John Shipper beat his opponent Andy Wyre by 144 votes in the District 3 Republican primary election. As they say in boxing circles, that is the tale of the tape. The Republicans knew that they had the election in the bag after the primary because no Democrat could ever garner enough votes to defeat the Republican machine. Had several hundred Independents and Democrats changed their party affiliation and helped to field better Republican candidates, our county might have had a dramatically better set of outcomes over the past four years. Again, if you cannot beat them, join them (at least temporarily). Sometimes the only way to have a voice in politics is to involve yourself in the party that is in control.

To change your party affiliation in time for the Republican Primary (on June 26, 2012) you must change your affiliation by this Friday, May 25, 2012. It can be done simply online by going to: <http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/vote/VoterHome.html> and following the step by step instructions. **It is a process legal and fair in Colorado as the State of Colorado voter web site will affirm.** Have your Colorado Drivers License handy.

Important 2012 PRIMARY Election Dates

Deadline to Change or Withdraw Major Party Affiliation for Primary [May 25th](#)

Deadline to Register to Vote for Primary Election [May 29th](#)

For a PDF copy of this article to print & share - click button:

