

THE GRANITE BAY
GAZETTE

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Behold, the rare Interderepublicrat!

If we put an end to party warfare, our government will work for us

The U.S. political system has gone bananas. Politicians are so concerned with getting themselves and their parties elected that they aren't doing the right thing for our country. People have been talking about the problem for a long time, but no one has come up with a solution.

Until now. We can get rid of the divisiveness between Democrats and Republicans if we get rid of the parties. Let's go to a one-party system. I say we all register as Inderepublicrats.

Republicans are being obstructionist because they are so focused on defeating Obama. Democrats have been just as bad in other circumstances.

Look at the recent debt-ceiling crisis. Something needed to be done to prevent our country from defaulting on our loans, but the Republicans focused on how they could use the crisis to make Pres. Obama look weak.

They purposely let the problem drag on for weeks, even though they caused great concern among the countries and investor groups that lend money to the U.S. government. All that concern we'll mean that the U.S. has to pay higher interest rates on its debt in the future.

That would be quite the irony: The Republicans claimed to want to cut government spending, but they may make the government spend more, while providing no additional benefit for citizens.

Recently, Pres. Obama sent out an email to supporters with the subject line, "Frustrated." Obama asked for support for his plan to create jobs. But Republicans in Congress don't want jobs to be created before the elections in November 2012. The country craves jobs, but creating them would make the president look good. So Republicans don't want to cooperate.

Right now, this Congress is on track to be the least productive Congress ever.

The Republicans justify their actions by saying that Pres. Obama is a disaster, and anything that helps remove him from office is justified. But the Republicans didn't do such a great job the last time they held the presidency – anyone remember George Bush and his war in Iraq, the way he turned budget surpluses into deficits, the financial crisis that he left behind?

So I'm not willing to put blind faith in the Republicans. I say we put off the fight about who should be the next president. Let's focus on what's right for the country now.

The problem is that the political parties can't and won't do that. They exist to get people elected.

COMMENTARY



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So parties won't pass a law or do anything else if it provides even a tiny advantage for the opposition – even if the advantage is what's right for the country.

The process for nominating presidential candidates makes the problem worse. At the moment, all the Republican candidates for president are trying to show just how conservative they are, so they compete to show how much they disdain government.

Democrats getting ready for next year's elections are competing to show how democratic they are, so they argue that government is the solution to everything.

Once the primaries are over, all the candidates will try to sound more moderate so they can appeal to the majority of Americans who are not on the political fringe, but the damage will be done. Candidates will be stuck with many of the extreme positions they laid out in the primaries. They have been raising a lot of money based on those positions, and they can't just walk away – especially if they ever want to raise money from those people again.

That's why the solution is for everyone to be Inderepublicrats. If the parties fade away, then no one has to show how Republican or Democratic they are.

We could still have the two (or more) most popular candidates run against each other in a general election, but they'd all be Inderepublicrats, so no one would be arguing for one party over another. They'd just be arguing about who is best-qualified for the position.

We need to stand up for what is right, not what our party is telling

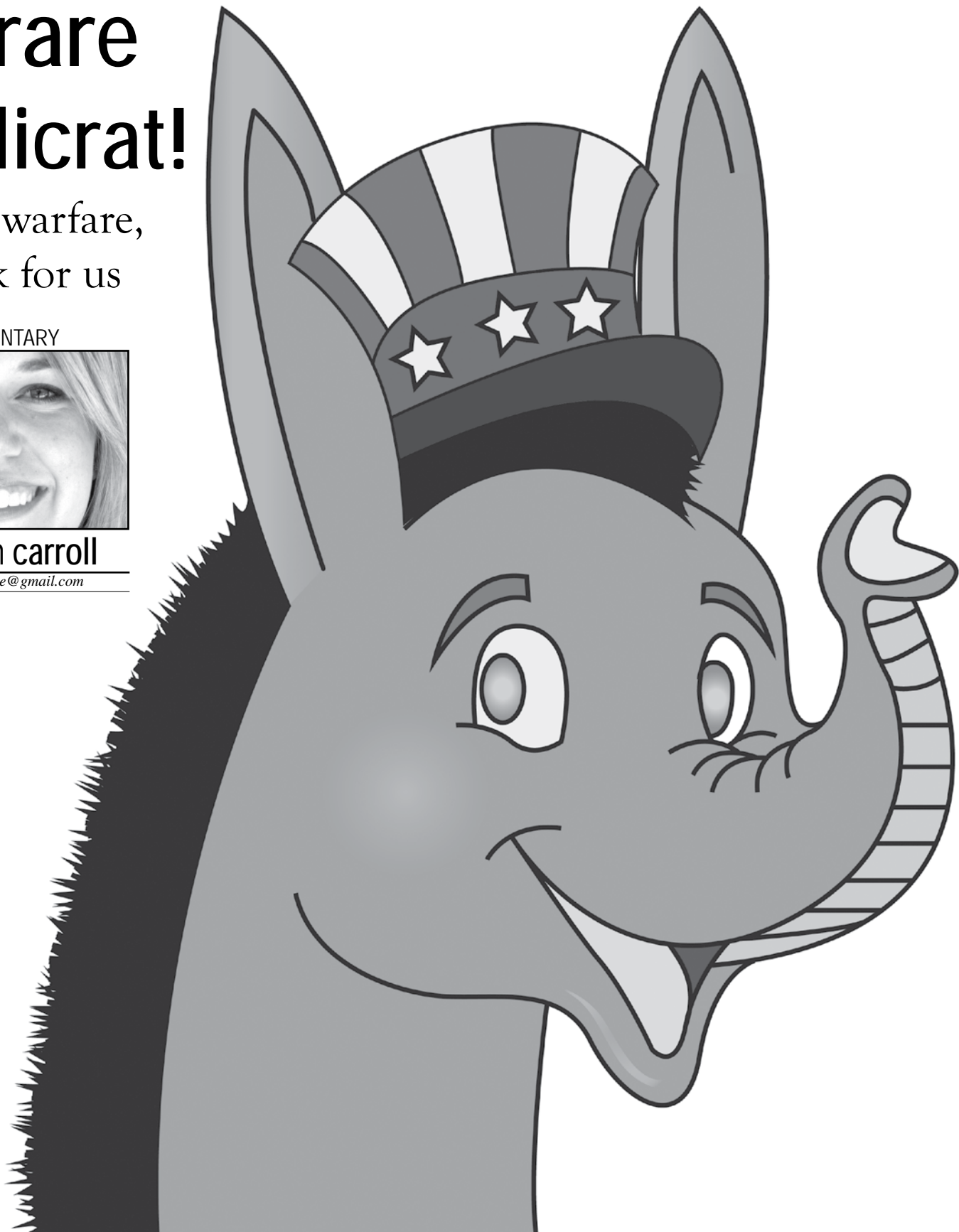
us to do. I'm not suggesting a one-party system like Fidel Castro has in Cuba, where one person dictates everything. I'm talking about a free-for-all where the best ideas and the best people win.

Ever heard the line "United we stand, divided we fall?" That's what's happening in American politics today: We're divided, so we're falling. We pick on our own president, making him seem weak at a time when we need him to be strong. Our inability to get anything done makes us the laughingstock of the world.

Sure, people will always have a difference of opinion, but if we're so patriotic, why is it OK to always try to stymie and embarrass the leader of our country, the one who was elected by the people, for the people?

It's actually really funny to watch the campaign trail for president. Except for Herman Cain, the Republican candidates are seasoned politicians. However, all they do is denounce Obama's policies, rarely offering a solution of their own.

Republicans often say they look to our Founding Fathers for advice. They might want to read George Washington's warning that political factions that seek to obstruct the execution of laws may claim to be following popular demand, when in reality their goal is to take power from the people



Gazette illustration/JESSICA REESE

“We need to stand up for what is right, not what our party is telling us to do.”

“People who register as either a Democrat or a Republican often refuse to consider the other side's ideas.”

and place it in the hands of men who do not deserve it. Everyone in Washington should read the letter Thomas Jefferson wrote to John Dickinson in 1801, in which he said: "The greatest good we can do our country is to heal its party divisions and make them one people."

Jefferson alluded to the blind faith that develops within people of a certain party. People who register as either a Democrat or a Republican often refuse to consider the other side's ideas. "The Democrats are evil socialists," the Republicans might say. "The Republicans are looking out for the wealthy and want no government at all," the Democrats might respond.

Politics have become like the Super Bowl, where there can be only one winner. In reality, all the contestants in politics should be working together so that all of us win.

The only real downside to a nation that works together is that Jon Stewart would have less material for "The Daily Show" – and I love Jon Stewart.

But the upside would be even greater. Divisive forces like Glenn Beck and Keith Olbermann would have to get real jobs. And we'd stop obsessing over whether Sarah Palin will compete for the Republican presidential nomination, because there would be no Republican nomination and she'd stand no chance in the debate about her qualifications – or lack thereof.

A nation of Inderepublicrats would focus on the good of all, not just the good of the party. So, as many of us get ready to vote for the first time in next year's elections, let's please not register as Republicans or Democrats. Let's register as Independents, an affiliation that will have to do for now as long as the term "Inderepublicrat" isn't yet official.

Shannon Carroll, a senior, is a Gazette co-editor-in-chief.

We can never forget what we can't remember

It can be very isolating to miss out on the most momentous event of your own generation, but that's the awkward reality for most GBHS underclassmen.

As we reflect on the tenth anniversary of September 11, we find we have nothing but fragmented memories of the attacks themselves. Our concept of the tragedy is much more indirect, if just as important.

We think not of planes and fireballs, but of tearful parents, George W. Bush's retaliatory speech, and, most of all, a looming, national uncertainty about the future of our safety. So, though we weren't

necessarily witnesses to the attacks, to say that September 11 didn't affect us would be a terrible fallacy.

Ten years later, politicians still mention that date at the drop of a hat, to tap into the powerful emotion we connect with it.

Most of us can barely remember a time before full-body scans, sorting liquids into a Zip-Lock, and taking off your shoes and belt before traveling.

The alternately somber and celebratory uproar caused by the death of Osama bin Laden shows that the wounds our country suffered 10 years ago have yet to fully heal – and they probably never will.

EDITORIAL

The voice of the Granite Bay Gazette

Undoubtedly, the September 11 attacks changed our lives forever.

Yet when people ask us what we remember about that day, we often struggle with what to say, and that can make a day of national mourning all the more uncomfortable.

It's difficult to not seem disrespectful, but at the same time, we can't wax poetic about

the details of a tragedy that we frankly don't remember.

We are put in the unpleasant situation of having to find something meaningful to say about our vague, distant concept of September 11, or else risk seeming cavalier.

We don't deny the attacks were terribly upsetting to those involved, and to the country as a whole. But people old enough to truly remember the attacks shouldn't expect us to force ourselves into mourning every year.

So long as we understand the scope of the 9/11, and show compassion to people we know personally who lost friends or family members that day, we

shouldn't need to exaggerate our sorrow.

Instead of dwelling on the tragedy of the attacks, we should simply go about our lives, all the more thankful for our security.

We needn't rewatch news coverage of the Twin Towers going down, or spend all day in a forced state of solemnity to prove our patriotism – we merely need to understand the disaster, acknowledge which threats are still present today, and focus on the political issues of the moment (our ineffective political parties, for instance).

So long as we aren't disrespectful, there is no need to rehash our grief. The best way to honor the victims of 9/11 is to not let their memory hinder us.