



Which way do I go, George...

It's really amazing how postal management can keep track of everything that is occurring and still have fingers left over to scratch their respective noses. BMCs are being closed down with the excessing of clerks and mailhandlers planned across the country. CSBCS machines are being deployed out of delivery units so that the automated sortation of mail can be concentrated in the plants. Excessing of letter carriers is being contemplated as FSS machines are built and ramped up. Caseable mail volume has dropped in this depressed economy.

In private industry, plants are closing and workers are seeing their jobs outsourced to Third World countries. Workers who still have jobs are watching their pension plans get watered down or eliminated. Gasoline prices have skyrocketed, resulting in jacked-up prices for all transportable goods. Medicine and health care is available, if one can afford it. The rich get tax breaks, the poor continue to lose more ground to the cost of living, and the middle class sinks into the abyss of rising costs. And, oh yeah, home foreclosures are at an all-time high and home loans, if you can afford one, are much more difficult to get approved for. And the environment....

Bear Stearns, a leading global investment firm, along with Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, leaders in providing affordable housing to America, get bailed out by the federal government, using our money to keep these industry giants afloat.

Oh, and with all this going on, we're in the middle of congressional and presidential elections. Man, this just gets better and better.

Now, one might think that all these things are interrelated, or one might think that none of these things have any bearing on the others. One might think that, even if you are personally doing OK, if we don't turn around what's going wrong in this country, our wages, health benefit plan, retirement annuity and affordable housing or affordable rent will all go down the tubes.

Or you might think that, no matter what happens, you'll always make it. If there are no jobs, you'll live off the land. No health care? You're healthy now and can worry about that when you get old, or when you get really sick or really injured you can move to Canada. No pension, no annuity? Heck, you can worry about that when you retire. Besides, you're never going to retire. What about your

kids and grandkids? Hey, you fended for yourself, they can do the same. Right?

Regardless of what you believe to be true, in the next two months you are going to have an impact on which way this country goes and whether it survives as the greatest country in the world.

Option 1—Don't support a candidate and don't vote. That way, regardless of the outcome of the election, it won't be your fault. Whoever wins, you can complain about the job they're doing and brag about not voting for him or her. When the winner messes things up, it won't be your responsibility.

Option 2—Assess the candidates based on family, friend or peer pressure, on their looks, or on their charisma. Ignore questioning the mindless lies and propaganda that you will be bombarded with during the campaign. Rely on your intuition that one candidate would be better to have a beer with over the other. Ignore the candidates' records. Even when their self-assessment and campaign promises fly directly in the face of their record, or despite the fact that they have flip-flopped on numerous occasions, believe that, this time, they really mean what they're saying. *I love being taken for a ride; just don't call me stupid.*

Options 3—Check out each candidate—their records, their consistency, their promises. Ask yourself whether any of those things make sense and how will they affect you, your family, this country. Once you've answered those questions, get involved. Volunteer for phone-banking, precinct-walking, making signs; assist at your candidate's campaign office. Make it your personal responsibility to get your candidate elected. Don't be afraid to discuss the election with those with differing opinions. Refrain from labeling the other side with defamatory characterizations. Discuss the candidates based on their merits and the issues. Vote and encourage everyone in your family and all of your friends to vote.

Whatever option you choose, it may affect how you see yourself. Most of us care about the direction this country will be led, as it affects our own lives, our children's lives, and/or America's future. But the significance of making that choice can define us individually. One either has the arrogance or ignorance to walk through life alone, or one believes they are out of options. They must make a difference this time. ☒