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Orangewood Consulting

Introduction

I have been sending out these newsletters on the penultimate Sunday of each month, so I feel obligated to do one this month even though it's Christmas Eve. As always, this is the time that we thank you for those cards and photographs and letters. We have sent no cards - this is our Holiday Season Greeting. Laurie and I hope that you are all set for a happy and relaxing holiday. We continue to be well, though our medical professionals say we are as good as old. Happy New Year everyone.

Inside the Campaign - Richard for Arizona

As I have been helping in the polling places over the last 20 years for Maricopa County, it should be no surprise that my number one objective is to ensure that our electoral systems and staff get the respect that they deserve. Recently I have seen elected officials pushing for full hand counts of ballots. I have participated in a full hand count of an election, so I am choosing to describe one in the Ramble below. My conclusion is that those pushing for such a process have not thought through the implications of the change.

Looking at progress on our campaign, we still have a few spots available for people wanting to make a \$5 Qualifying Contribution to help me get Clean Election funding, but hurry they are going fast! Seriously though, if you live in Legislative District 3, please consider making a \$5 contribution if you haven't already or asking your friends. [This page](#) on the Arizona Secretary of State's website is the place to go.

The Rambler

I helped with elections in England. The General Elections there are to choose the 650 members of parliament (MPs). The whole of the United Kingdom is divided into 650 parliamentary constituencies. The constituency I lived in is called Birmingham Edgbaston. It has nearly 69,000 voting age residents and the turnout at the last general was a bit over 42,000. (61.5%).

Each voter gets a ballot with the names of the people running to be an MP (there are two main parties and often 2 to 3 additional names. Voters indicate their preference by putting an X or a checkmark alongside their selection. Note that there is only one person being selected for one position on this ballot. The voter can mail the ballot or can put it into a ballot box at a polling place on election day. After the polls close (at 10:00pm) the ballot boxes are taken from the several polling places to a central counting house in the constituency.

There, teams (I was on one of them) open the box, sort the ballots into piles based on the voter's selection and then they are counted and recounted. The candidates are usually present, overseeing what is going on. The counts from each ballot box are recorded and sent to the head table to be consolidated for the overall constituency result. Typically the national results start to trickle in starting at midnight and going through the night and into the following morning. So, 40,000 votes, one question, 2 -12 hours of work to count.

Given that Arizona has ballots that usually include at least 8 races, 10 ballot propositions and the names of many judges to be voted on, it is hard to imagine how hand counting will scale up. Do we put all the ballots in piles for the first race and count and record them? Then put them all in different piles for the second race and count and record them, etcetera? Perhaps we have one person looking at each ballot and reading the results to someone who records them - with appropriate supervision, of course? That reading and recording is error prone. Perhaps a machine that reads the whole ballot and records totals of all the selections? Maybe we could cut out the middleman and have the voter feed their ballot into the machine. Hmm...it's sounding more and more like the Maricopa County Elections system.

The Rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

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