

Staff Column: A Nation Poll- Arized

If you're a rabid Donald Trump supporter, your first stop each morning may be the Los Angeles Times tracking poll.

That survey, which follows the same 3,000 eligible voters over the course of months, has been very favorable to your guy. On Thursday morning the LAT poll had Trump with a very slim lead.

Trump fans also like to cite polls by Rasmussen and Investor's Business Daily, which have Trump and Clinton pretty much in a dead heat. Based on results from the past three presidential elections, IBD is heralded for its accuracy.

But if you favor Hillary Clinton, you embrace the Associated Press poll, which gives her a commanding 14-point lead. ABC News also has Secretary Clinton up by double digits.

To borrow from Marvin Gaye, 'What's Goin' On?'

First, let's agree that the polls are not 'rigged.' Sure, some may sample more Democrats than others, but all of them want to be correct. If you're polling for AP and your results turn out to be absolute garbage, you won't be with AP next time around.

A case in point is the Gallup Poll, first made famous when George Gallup predicted FDR's landslide in 1936. Gallup got it all wrong in 2012, predicting a win by Mitt Romney. What did the venerable firm do? It fell on its sword and abandoned its presidential tracking poll.

Naturally, we are partial to the Fox News poll, a brand new version of which was just released Wednesday. According to our conjurers, soothsayers, and wizards, Donald Trump has cut Hillary Clinton's lead in half and trails by just three.

As for enthusiasm, Trumpians are far more excited about their

candidate, which can be a big plus on Election Day. On the other hand, the Fox News poll has Hillary Clinton with a massive 77-point advantage among blacks.

But speaking with Bret Baier Wednesday, Trump aide Brunell Donald-Kyei claimed black Trump supporters are simply afraid to state their opinion and will 'speak up' in the election booth.

That question of voter reluctance extends way beyond black precincts. If you're a Trump guy or gal in a liberal one-party town such as, say, Princeton, New Jersey, you may want to keep that a secret. At least if you care about being invited to the good parties and getting your kids into the right private schools.

That fear effect does not mean polls are 'rigged,' but it does remind many observers of the Brexit vote, when Brits were afraid to admit that they wanted a divorce from the European Union. The pollsters got that one wrong, dead wrong.

So are there hidden Trump voters out there, unwilling to display their allegiances and bumper stickers? We don't know, and neither do the pollsters. But, again, that does not mean the polls are rigged.

However, you could legitimately make the point that the mainstream media are doing absolutely everything in their power to elect Hillary Clinton. And that power, while waning, is still considerable.

The notion of 'objective' reporting went out the window in 2016, unless it means editors and anchors 'objecting' en masse to Donald Trump. They generally loathe the man and everything about him. Many outlets are reluctant to report on the very damning WikiLeaks revelations, while they tiptoe around Bill Clinton's past sins and questions about the Clinton Foundation.

On the subject of 'rigged,' it certainly seems like FBI boss James Comey and Attorney General Loretta Lynch put their thumbs on the scales of justice. Actually, they sat on the scales, pretty much breaking the darned device. Comey and Lynch seemed determined to give Hillary Clinton a pass, legally speaking, and a pass she got.

Nevertheless, like her private server, Hillary Clinton's reputation remains in the basement. Something like two-thirds of Americans doubt her honesty, not a great measure for a would-be president.

The simple fact is that no one can predict this election with any certainty. It could be that Hillary Clinton will win by double-digits and set off rapture in media circles. Or Donald Trump could eke by on the strength of his pitchfork brigades, sending the media elite into spasms of emotional distress. That is a delicious thought for any of you afflicted by that common malady known as schadenfreude.

To sum it up, you can say the coverage is way, way skewed, maybe even 'rigged.' And you can say that the wheels of justice hit a major pothole on the Hillary Highway. But the pollsters? They're basically trying to get it right so they can live to poll another day.

Once again, this has been an election unlike any other, and we will never see anything remotely similar in the future. For that fact alone most Americans are extremely thankful. And you sure don't need a poll to reach that conclusion.