

# Invitation To A Tea Party

Recently, my wife told me to stop picking on the Tea Party. Frankly, I was taken aback that after six books and 1500 articles espousing my conservative beliefs, not to mention 29 years of marriage, I would be accused of attacking those with whom I tended to agree.

But Yvonne's words gave me pause and made me think about it. I had to admit that on a couple of occasions I had admitted that I couldn't stand listening to Sarah Palin's voice, and that the recurring "You betchas" had begun wearing on me like an Alaskan water torture.

I had also taken Ted Cruz to task because his carefully engineered, but ill-timed, shutdown of the federal government, had allowed Clinton bagman Terry McAuliffe to defeat Republican Ken Cuccinelli in Virginia's 2013 gubernatorial race. To be fair, Cruz wasn't entirely responsible. If the Libertarian candidate Robert Sarvis hadn't sucked off roughly seven percent of the votes, Cuccinelli would today be ensconced in the governor's mansion.

But that hardly makes me an archenemy of the Tea Party. From my perspective, the major problem with it is that it is composed in great part of true believers who are unwilling to settle for half a loaf when in most parts of America the only choice is between half a loaf or no bread at all. In all but a small handful of states, a real conservative couldn't be elected dog catcher if that job were ever made an elective office.

From the email I receive from the Tea Party faithful, it seems to me that they despise those they dismiss as RINOs (Republicans in Name Only), far more than they do Democrats. By doing so, they ignore the fact that America is not a conservative nation, much as some of us might wish it were.

Outside of places like Texas, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Utah, people like John Cornyn, Trey Gowdy, Mike Lee, Jason Chaffetz and Ted Cruz, couldn't even win a GOP primary. An unfortunate fact of life is that geography generally determines which politicians are electable, but it's an unpleasant fact that the Tea Party faithful often choose to ignore.

I know that a lot of Tea Partiers didn't care for Scott Brown when he was the senator from Massachusetts and aren't rooting for him to trounce Jeanne Shaheen in New Hampshire next month. But the fact remains that in New England, only a moderate Republican has even the slightest chance of winning a statewide election. Do they really prefer to have Elizabeth "Pocahontas" Warren in the Senate?

In other words, the Tea Party motto seems to be "All or Nothing" when it should be "51 or Bust." Any number less than 51 means that Harry Reid retains total control of the Senate and means that if there's an opening or two on the Supreme Court over the next couple of years, there will be no way to stop someone like Eric Holder from joining his soul mates Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor on the bench.

So, as much as I love my wife, I will not accept her charge that I'm an enemy of the Tea Party. Inasmuch as I am not merely a conservative when it comes to the economy, but would eliminate or at least slash the funding of nearly every department and agency in Washington, including Energy, Education, Commerce, Labor, Health & Human Resources, and the EPA; would do away with federal funding of the arts; am opposed to same sex marriages, the current tax laws, abortion on demand and legalized drugs; but would expand capital punishment to include such crimes as rape, child molestation and computer hacking; and would erect a 25-foot high, 2000 mile wall, at our southern border; I am probably to the right of Attila the Hun, who for some reason or other seems to be the yardstick by which conservatives are measured.

What I mainly dislike about the Tea Party is the way they often ignore William F. Buckley's wise counsel to vote for the most conservative candidate... who can win. In other words, feel free to support any Republican you like in the primary, but don't then stay home sulking on Election Day if a more moderate candidate wins the nomination. Also, Karl Rove is not the enemy, Barack Obama is.

Keep in mind that these days any Republican is better than any Democrat because every Democrat would toss out James Madison's Constitution and replace it with Saul Alinsky's manifesto.

That doesn't mean they don't lie about their true nature. As we've seen this election season, Democrats who are forced to fight for their political lives will lie about being rubberstamps for Obama; that, in spite of voting for his policies 99% of the time and voting 100% of the time for ObamaCare, insist they have often parted company with the President and Harry Reid on issues vital to the nation.

Of course they lie, but they feel they're lying in a good cause; namely, getting themselves re-elected so they can go back to Congress and reattach their lips to the President's rump.

In conclusion, it's not I who am at war with the Tea Party, but the Tea Party which, far too often, seems to be at war with the GOP. It's okay to be sick and tired of John Boehner and Mitch McConnell just so long as you are still rational enough to recognize that they are preferable to Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi.

There is nothing to prevent the Tea Party from going its own way, to cutting itself off from what it dismisses as the Republican establishment, which includes roughly 80% of the registered Republicans in the nation. But if they do, they will end up playing the same spoiler role in American politics as the Libertarians, who can't actually get anyone elected,

but can occasionally garner enough votes to deny, for instance, Virginia's governorship to a worthy Republican.

Let me just conclude my remarks by saying that I think the Tea Party serves a good purpose in that it encourages Republican candidates to be as conservative as they can be without serving themselves up as martyrs to the cause. But they should also keep in mind what I say to all minority groups – be they racial, religious or political – you have every right to be heard, but you are not entitled to have the final word.

It is always and should always be the dog that wags the tail, and not the other way around.

**Burt's Webcast is every Wednesday at Noon Pacific Time.**

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