

Billboards, radios, televisions, and newspapers all bombard us with the latest play-by-play and color reporting covering the players and the politics of our modern-day version of the ancient Circensian games: Elections. With no less brutality and enthusiasm enjoyed by ancient Romans in their circuses, today's political gladiators square off with press packets and microphones to win the adulation of the admiring throngs. The ballot box is the judging arena, and they all aspire for a thumbs-up from the masses. The laurel wreath is a relatively modest paying, temporary job and all the associated perks.

But a great many of the masses no longer attend the circus, and they decline to judge the fitness of those who present themselves for public office. The talking heads all love to refer to the lack of voter turnout as 'apathy,' and many of their adoring audiences are inclined to believe whatever these color commentators espouse. The problem is, they are just repeating their own recycled opinions. They're old, They're tired, and based on my observations, it's just wishful thinking.

Unlike the high-profile, self-proclaimed 'experts' who dominate the airwaves, I have the opportunity to spend a lot of time speaking to the 'man on the street' all over the country. What is reported by the media bears little resemblance to reality out here in 'fly-over' country.

While apathy undoubtedly plays a part in low-voter turnout, the underlying reason many people don't vote is because they have a major loss of confidence in our political system and in our government. Comments such as "Why should I vote? The politicians don't listen to us, anyway," and "The vote is predetermined so our vote doesn't really count," and "It doesn't matter who you vote for, they're all the same anyway," demonstrate the frustration and disgust most informed Americans feel about the status quo, its principle players, and the transparently biased reporting by the media. A growing population of Americans literally marvel at the fact that the powers-that-be and their cohorts are completely clueless.

Rather than apathy, low-voter turnout is becoming more of a passive-aggressive response to a process and a system that many homespun Americans believe is corrupted beyond redemption. It is a peaceful, civil demonstration whose significance is measured by the increasing

absence of participation. It is a massive, passive vote for “None OfThe Above.”

Americans are not an apathetic people. We are not the “. . .huddled masses yearning to be free. . .” Our heritage is one of fierce independence and rugged individualism. As more of our rights are trod upon by invasive and abusive government practices, the proudly historical “Don’t Tread On Me!” standard is defiantly flying with increasing frequency.

While the public may appear to be apathetic at the polls, non-voters are practicing subtle and not-so-subtle forms of individual activism and abandoning government-funded programs to take responsibility for their own lives and futures. While reporters and politicians bemoan the lack of voter turnout, they are overlooking the fact that communities are a-buzz with behind-the-scenes activity that is undermining the status-quo.

Parents are taking their children out of public schools in droves, in defiance of the strangle-hold over curriculum and social engineering espoused by the liberal teachers’ lobbying organizations and the phoney-baloney promises of lame-brained politicians. Phonics, core curriculum, rote memorization, non-revisionist history and civics are appearing in charter schools nationwide. Other parents are choosing to home-school, instilling their own values into their children’s curriculum. Many private schools have waiting lists for enrollment. Educational rights groups are flourishing; school voucher and education tax credits initiatives appear on ballots nationwide.

This is a demonstrative ‘drop-out vote’ against the Department of Education’s 20 years of educational failures in this country. Each child educated independently of the DOE is one less mass-produced automaton who is programmed to eagerly lap up propaganda at the feet of our “Big Brother” government.

Tens of thousands (actually millions) of former taxpayers have quietly declined to volunteer into our government’s self-professed voluntary Federal tax reporting system. Parents are refusing to obtain Social Security numbers, birth certificates or vaccinations for their children. Increasing numbers of common-law marriages are being performed by ministers sans a state-issued marriage license. Fundamentalists are refusing to attend and financially support churches that have the IRS’s 501(c)(3) stamp of approval.

Increasing numbers of people aspire to less dependance on outside products and services

and are becoming more self-sufficient by raising their own food, practicing alternative healing remedies, choosing to live 'off the grid' or by acquiring old-fashioned skills. Undoubtedly, there are still militia groups out there, too, keeping a low profile. People *are* voting - by dropping out of the status-quo.

Some activism is not so subtle, taking on a more pro-active flavor. Property-rights groups are springing up to fight the unconstitutional 'takings' of property through our government's various alphabet agencies' strong-arm tactics. Parents' and family rights groups who are proactive against illegal and unwarranted Social Services interventions into non-abusive families are growing at an astonishing rate. Law study groups meet daily nationwide, to propagate the knowledge needed to peacefully fight an entire system that is out of control. Increasing numbers of pro-se litigants are storming the courtrooms in protest of their rights being violated and distrusting any attorney to adequately defend them in a judicial system that is heavily stacked against them.

Some activists are actually running for office as third party candidates. Many of these candidates regretfully acknowledge that they are 'pissing into the wind' yet they feel they have to DO something to focus public attention on the corruption of our system. And they do provide an intermediate alternative for the voters who still hopefully, and maybe naively believe their vote actually means something. The number of votes third party candidates receive can often reflect future permutations of demonstrative non-voters.

Contrary to popular propaganda, not all non-voters are apathetic couch potatoes, sucked in by the contemporary bread-and-circuses phenomenon of fast-food, sports, sitcoms, and daytime talk shows. Many non-voting Americans are carefully watching what the government is doing, and quietly preparing to make their stand. They are reading, and learning, and passing their knowledge on.

While there is no zany public political campaign like in "Brewster's Millions" to promote a write-in vote for "None Of The Above," maybe it really doesn't have to be an organized effort. After all, that is what a significant percentage of the non-votes appear to be about. How significant? Who knows? Nobody's ever thought to analyze it. It poses an interesting question.

Maybe the powers-that-be think the premise of a protest 'non-vote' is too absurd. Maybe,

just for fun, they should add up the non-votes and count them towards “None Of The Above.”

Who do you suppose would win?

Which begs the question: What if they had an election, and nobody came?