

POLITICS AS USUAL: Burning it all down

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

Well, it's all over now but the cryin'.

The unthinkable is now thunk.

Trump will be the President of the United States. Even writing that sentence seems ridiculous to me, but there you have it. The facts are the facts, despite however much folks would want it to be otherwise. The most disliked candidate ever to run for office has managed to obtain it. But, leaving all the sobering surreal reality aside, let's get some things out of the way first, shall we?

Let's deal with facts.

Trump did not win the Presidency, he won the Electoral College. At the time of writing this column, Clinton's edge over Trump was approaching one million more votes. In fact, some agencies are reporting, by the time all the votes are counted (and that's another bizarre thing about their system) it looks like Clinton will have almost two million more votes than Trump, or nearly 2 per cent more people wanted her than him.

She already has more votes cast for her than Obama did in securing his presidency. And Trump has less votes cast for him than Romney did in losing the presidency.

So, let's dispense with the smug declarations that he has a 'clear' mandate to govern. He has nothing of the sort. Yes, the people have indeed spoken, but once again their voices were not heard. In terms of actual votes cast, Trump should not be the president. But he is, so now the world has to deal with it.

But let's deal with why the contest was so close in the first place. How did it come to pass that a trust fund baby, a self-described 'blue-collar billionaire' came to be the voice of the unemployed rust belt workers?

Because he promised to blow it all up. He railed about the 'elites' who don't care about regular folks, folks who have been left behind in the new economy. He did a good job of speaking directly to them. And he offered nothing but a firm promise to burn it all down.

There was a lot of comment on Trump's rhetoric during the campaign and rightly so, but not enough on Clinton's tone-deafness when it came to the working class.

Her comments on the coal business are a good example. Imagine being a third generation coal miner and hear her say that she's putting coal out of business. Would you vote for her? It doesn't matter that she is right that we shouldn't use coal anymore. What are you offering the millions of people who rely on it for an income?

Clinton and Obama talked about the fantastic recovery of the US following the 2008 market crash. And on paper they are right. The economy is booming ? but only for some people. I saw a very stark figure on CNN the other day that drove this point home. Since 2008, over 8.4 million jobs have been created for people with post-secondary education and just 80,000 for folks with just high-school education.

You can't get a job at Starbucks without a BA these days. What does that say to folks without one?

Only 40 per cent of Americans have a college degree. Does that then mean that fully 60 per cent of the population is unemployable? There is real and justifiable anger about the economy across the globe. What is the answer? I don't know. But I do know that it isn't Donald Trump and, clearly, neither was it Hillary Clinton.