

## POLITICS AS USUAL: Twas the night before...

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

Millions of Americans went to bed on Monday night in fevered anticipation of what Election Day will bring. Will they wake up to a shiny present, something they always wanted? Or will it be the proverbial lump of coal? I dare say the outcome will be both, a catastrophe or a blessing, depending on your view point. What it won't be is the end. Because regardless of the decided vote ? Clinton or Trump ? the damage that has been done to all facets of the relationships between Americans and the very institutions they hold so dear is yet to be known. As I write this column, in the wee hours of November 8, Americans are already casting their votes in one of, if not the most historic elections in modern history; a contest not between competing ideas or ideologies, but between competing personalities. A self-described billionaire prone to vulgarities and bombast, who literally reveled in his lack of even basic knowledge about the job of president versus a quintessential Washington insider, with over 30 years of experience and the significant baggage that goes along with it. It was a show, not a campaign. Let's not kid ourselves, there wasn't much substance being discussed throughout much of this general election campaign. It was all surface stuff ? nasty quotes, personal attacks, controversies?endless controversies. Lost amidst the mud and slime was any real discussion of a way forward, despite Clinton's frequent attempts to get back on a positive message about the future of America. But the bigger question, and one that I am sure will be examined to death in the coming months, is how did it come to this? Despite their competing unfavourability ratings, how is this such a difficult choice when millions of folks the world over see this as an obvious, though perhaps not appealing choice? Folks everywhere are incredulous that anyone would consider choosing the wildly undisciplined and wholly unprepared candidate over the seasoned, well-informed and battle tested candidate. It seems a simple choice. It should be, but it isn't. Because this has never been about the person most qualified to do the job. If it was, then the race would have sewn up on day one. On paper, there has never been a more qualified candidate than Hillary Clinton. But presidents aren't made of paper. They are made of flesh and bone. Objectively, Trump offers nothing. No plan. No strategy. No policy. But what he does offer is a muscular smack down of the ?elites? that have given so little thought to the everyday Americans left behind by the increased globalization of the economy. Yes, he is all bumper sticker slogans, but that's because they work. ?Drain the swamp? resonates more than ?stronger together?. Sad but true. The reality that millions and millions of folks are so fed up with the status quo that they are eagerly willing to support a candidate as manifestly unfit for any kind of public office as Donald Trump, is a fact that must be reckoned with. Their fears are legitimate. Their beefs are legitimate. Their anger is legitimate. Even if their candidate is not. Come November 9, regardless of the outcome, America and indeed perhaps the world will have to face that reckoning for the choice that has been made, or not made.